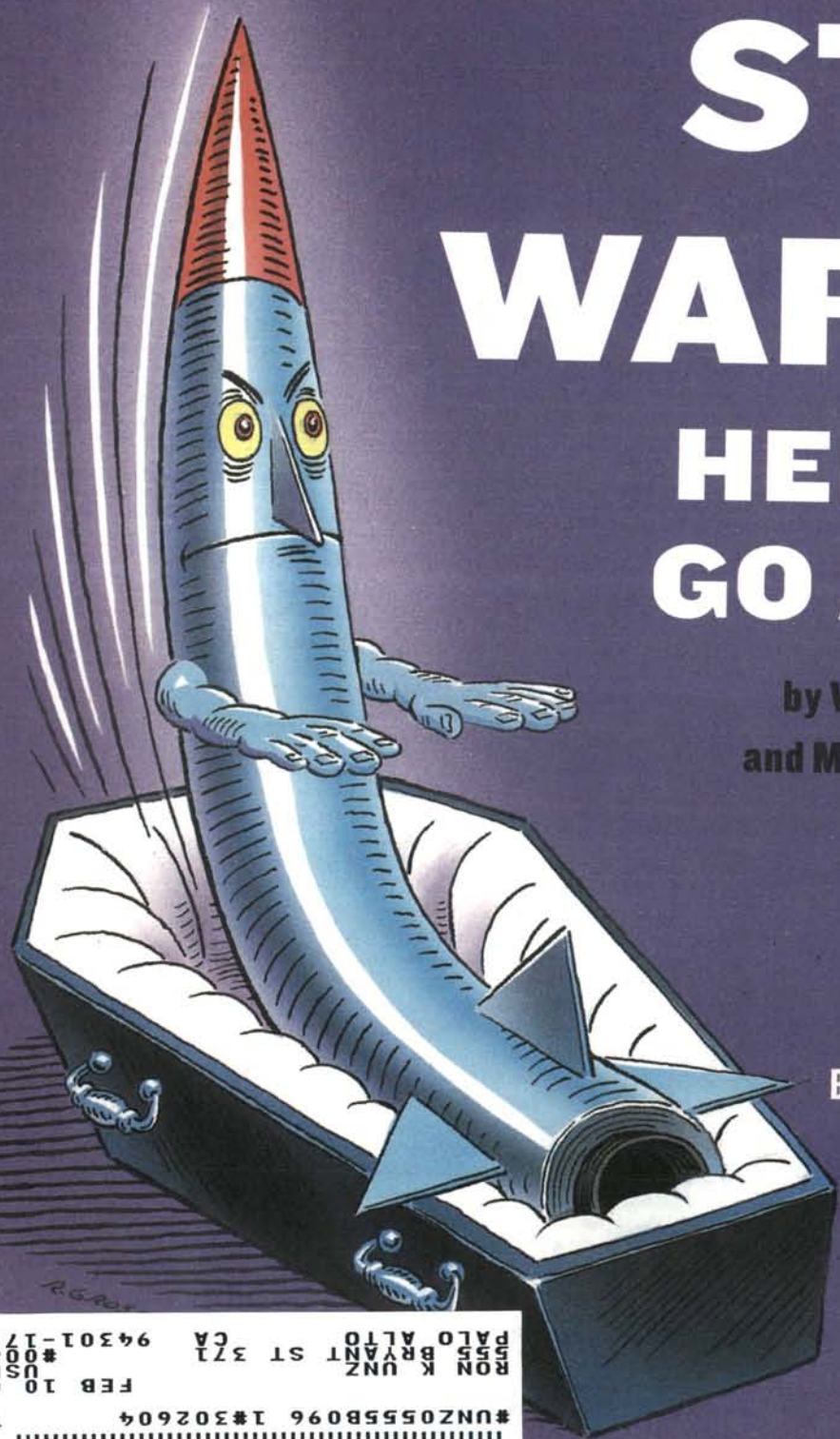


The Nation.

STAR WARS II HERE WE GO AGAIN

by **WILLIAM D. HARTUNG**
and **MICHELLE CIARROCCA**



BLOCKING RUSH LIMBAUGH
Al Franken

ANNAN'S FIRST TERM
Ian Williams

**THE LARAMIE
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LETTERS



ISRAEL'S KHIAM PRISON

Hillsborough, N.C.

■ In his otherwise excellent editorial, "Israel's Lebanon Clients" [May 22], Neve Gordon makes it appear that Amnesty International holds the South Lebanon Army, and not the Israelis, responsible for human rights violations in the Kham prison in Israeli-occupied Southern Lebanon.

Although the prison is now closed and all the prisoners in Kham have been released, AI has consistently rejected the Israeli government claim that the prisoners in Kham were being held by the South Lebanon Army. During the occupation of its self-styled security zone in South Lebanon, Israel was directly responsible for Kham and for all the actions of its proxy militia. Further, Amnesty has stated that Israel's funding, control and training of the SLA, including the torturers in Kham, was not in doubt.

While at last the prisoners—men, women, even children—have left this center of torture and injustice, there are still many loose ends left untied. AI is calling on the Israeli government to free the remaining hostages held in Israel, including Shaykh 'Abd al-Karim 'Ubayd and Mustafa al-Dirani. Also, the fate of the disappeared, many of whom have been missing for years, needs to be resolved. These include Ron Arad, an Israeli airman, missing and assumedly held captive for fourteen years.

The Lebanese government has said that those who bore arms for the SLA will be tried according to Lebanese law and that it will cooperate fully with the United Nations. Amnesty International stresses that the state is responsible for the human rights of all people living under its jurisdiction and accordingly urges the Lebanese government to insure that administrative personnel are deployed to insure the life, liberty and security of all the people in south Lebanon. Further, all those who have committed grave human rights violations, whether they be Israeli, Lebanese, Syrian or other, should be brought to justice. Only in a context of human rights for all can there be a true peace in the region.

MARTY ROSENBLUTH

*Israel/Occupied Territories/Palestinian
Authority Country Specialist AIUSA*

LATER, AT THE SEDER...

Bloomington, Ind.

■ John Nichols quotes Rabbi Steven Jacobs as saying at a solidarity seder that the Hebrew people walked out of Egypt 5,000 years ago ["The Beat," May 15]. My *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says the Exodus was probably in the thirteenth century BC. If it's right, the good rabbi was off by about 1,700 years.

DON LICHTENBERG

AMPLIFICATION

With recent reports linking high blood levels of lead to juvenile delinquency, the lead story grows. In our May 15 issue we ran a number of letters commenting on Jamie Lincoln Kitman's "The Secret History of Lead" [March 20]. Additional communications since then prompt a further editorial comment. The original lengthy manuscript contained footnotes, scrupulously documenting the sources of all quotations, facts, analyses. These were used for fact-checking, but as an editorial decision these citations were omitted from the published article for reasons of style and length, although the names of primary sources consulted were listed in the author's note. The editors regret the omission of the full citations to the articles from which Kitman drew important information and would like to give credit to those authors and articles and enable those interested to read them. Kitman joins us in gratefully acknowledging the pathbreaking work that preceded his article. Of particular value in providing archival material was David Rosner and Gerald Markowitz, "A 'Gift of God?' The Public Health Controversy Over Leaded Gasoline During the 1920s," *American Journal of Public Health*, April 1985. We also single out articles and papers by Alan P. Loeb on "Sloanism," Ethyl's divestments and the Kehoe rule: "Birth of the Kettering Doctrine: Fordism, Sloanism and the Discovery of Tetraethyl Lead," *Business and Economic History*, Fall 1995; "Surmountable Obstacles to the Adoption of Emissions Trading Programs: The Historical Perspective"; and "Birth of the Kehoe Rule: Implications of the Surgeon General's Review of Tetraethyl Lead, 1925-1926." Special thanks also to the following authors: William Kovarik, "Henry Ford, Charles Kettering and the 'Fuel of the Future,'" *Automotive History Review*, Spring 1998; William Graebner, "Hegemony Through Science: Information Engineering and Lead Toxicology, 1925-1965," in David Rosner and Gerald Markowitz, eds., *Dying for Work: Workers' Safety and Health in Twentieth-Century America*, Indiana University Press, 1989. Jerome O. Nriagu, "Clair Patterson and Robert Kehoe's Paradigm of 'Show Me the Data' on Environmental Lead Poisoning," Jerome O. Nriagu, "Automotive Lead Pollution: Clair Patterson's Role in Stopping It," in Cliff Davidson, ed., *Clean Hands: Clair Patterson's Crusade Against Environmental Lead Contamination*, Nova Science Publishers, 1999. H.L. Needleman, "Clair Patterson and Robert Kehoe: Two Points of View of Lead Toxicity," *Environmental Research*, Section A, 1998. George B. Kauffman, "Midgley: Saint or Serpent?" *Chemtech*, December 1989.

AND SPEAKING OF LEAD...

Brooklyn, N.Y.

■ *The Nation* should take Jamie Kitman's article on lead as a model for a series on other products, like asbestos, pesticides, chlorine chemicals, fossil fuels and transgenic crops. The pattern of behavior by the purveyors of these products, pioneered by Du Pont and Ethyl, is what we call "The Five Ds": *Deny* that your product is harmful, *Delay* solutions and regulations, *Divide* the opposition, *Dupe* the public with PR and *Dump* the product in the Third World, claiming the poor need it for development.

As interesting as Kitman's article was, it would be more useful to chronicle these stories *before* the globalization of harmful products. For examples, see "Greenhouse Gangsters vs. Climate Justice" at www.corpwatch.org/climate and "The Barons of Bromide" at www.corpwatch.org/feature/bromide.

KENNY BRUNO
Corporate Watch

CATHOLIC WORKER STILL WORKING

Blue Bell, Pa.

■ I am glad Maurice Isserman reported the move to canonize Dorothy Day ["Saint Dorothy?" May 1], but his use of the past tense regarding the Catholic Worker is inappropriate. The movement continues. In Philadelphia alone, there are three Catholic Worker houses with members who are leaders not only in their work of serving the poor but in other causes as well: Joanna Berrigan against sanctions in Iraq; Liz Walz, convicted for protesting the use of depleted uranium; and Karen Lenz, who edits *Equal wRites*, a newsletter supporting women's ordination in the Catholic Church. The last shows that the radical movement can go beyond the founder's vision while remaining inspired by it.

REGINA BANNAN

VOICES OF THE POOR

New York City

■ Can 34.5 million Americans be invisible? If they are poor, maybe so, is the sad implication of Eric Alterman's April 24 "Full-Court Press." The poor *are* too often unseen and unheard, and don't speak in clever soundbites that can hold the attention of the media mavens, as Alterman notes. Nonetheless, the lives and voices of the poor are important and often fascinating. *Lives on the Line: American Families and the Struggle to Make Ends Meet*, by Martha Shirk, Neil Bennett and Larry Aber (Westview), gives an in-depth look into the lives of ten American families in poverty and provides some fresh thinking

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EDITORIALS

Bush's New START

George W. Bush's recent nuclear arms-control initiative appeared, at first glance at least, to be a breath of fresh air in a stagnant room. And indeed much of what he said, though clearly crafted for short-term political gain, was overdue and welcome. "The cold war logic that led to the creation of massive stockpiles on both sides is now outdated," he said. "Our mutual security need no longer depend on a nuclear balance of terror." For good measure he added, "These unneeded weapons are the expensive relics of dead conflicts. And they do nothing to make us more secure." The wonder of it is that it took so long once the cold war had ended for a presidential candidate—or a President—to say these things. Bush also said he would call for de-alerting "as many weapons as possible" and carry out *unilateral* cuts in the US arsenal.

Bush's proposals, however, contain major flaws. The biggest is that he linked missile reduction to the development of an updated version of the Reagan era's "Star Wars" missile defense system—a system that so far is technically unworkable, enormously expensive and, most important, would require effectively scrapping the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty (see the article on page 11). Defenses without the reality of nuclear disarmament could torpedo all existing arms-control arrangements and propel us toward a sort of nuclear anarchy. Bush does not consider the consequences of scrapping the ABM treaty; Russia has said that if the United States goes ahead with the new system, it will feel obliged to accelerate its nuclear buildup. China could also feel pressure to increase its arsenal, impelling India and Pakistan to do likewise.

There are also large gaps in Bush's proposal. He may say

that he would carry out unilateral cuts in the US arsenal, but the military chiefs to whom he has said he would look for guidance are not willing to go even as low as Russian President Putin has proposed. And while calling the balance of terror obsolete, he still called for "deterrence"—two things that, in recent years, have been one and the same. If he would "deter" in a new way, he did not specify how.

Al Gore's response was tired and unconvincing. Assuming the mantle of the tough guy, he intoned that "nuclear unilateralism will hinder, rather than help, arms control," adding, "If you're not careful, you could have a reduction of missiles and a more dangerous world." He remains mired in the stale thinking of the cold war and the Clinton Administration, and had no positive proposal to make.

There is a simple solution to the problems with the intriguing yet dangerously destabilizing Bush proposals. If "the lowest possible number" of offensive nuclear weapons is understood to be zero, defenses cease to be destabilizing. They create no fear of a first strike with offensive nuclear weapons because, by inspected agreement, there would be no nuclear weapons. That was the program of Ronald Reagan (although histories raise questions as to whether he fully understood what he was proposing). As he wrote in his memoir, when the nations of the world agree to eliminate nuclear weapons, strategic defense "could serve as a safety valve against cheating."

Our advice to George W. Bush is that he should more zealously study the thought of President Reagan and call for the abolition of nuclear arms. In this post-cold war world the nuclear menace hasn't magically melted away; if anything it has grown worse, and the next President must move toward complete nuclear disarmament. If Bush will not do it, opportunity beckons Al Gore.

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The Nation (ISSN 0027-8378) is published weekly (except for the second week in January, and biweekly the third week of July through the third week of September) by The Nation Company, L.P. © 2000 in the U.S.A. by The Nation Company, L.P., 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003. (212) 209-5400. Washington Bureau: Suite 308, 110 Maryland Avenue N.E., Washington, DC 20002. (202) 546-2239. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. International Telex: 667 155 NATION. Subscription orders, changes of address and all subscription inquiries: The Nation, PO Box 55149, Boulder, CO 80322-5149, or call 1-800-333-8536. Subscription Price: 1 year, \$52; 2 years, \$90. Add \$20 postage for Canada. Other subscription orders outside the US add \$35 for airmail postage. **Please allow 4-6 weeks for receipt of your first issue and for all subscription transactions.** Back issues \$4 prepaid (\$5 foreign) from: The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003. The Nation is available on microfilm from: University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Nation, PO Box 55149, Boulder, CO 80322-5149. This issue went to press on May 31. Printed in U.S.A. on recycled paper.

INTERNET: Selections from The Nation are available on Thursday by 12 midnight Eastern Time, at www.thenation.comE-MAIL: info@thenation.com. Letters to the Editor: letters@thenation.com.

Going Postal

Bravo and Happy Birthday to *Harper's Magazine*, and to Lewis Lapham and John (Rick) MacArthur (editor and publisher, respectively). In late May the esteemed monthly celebrated 150 years of distinguished publishing even as hundreds of literati descended on New York's Grand Central Station and danced to "Alexander's Ragtime Band" and other vintage standards to mark the occasion. And felicitations to Anne Fadiman (editor) and *The American Scholar*, which, the same night, down the street between Fifth and Sixth avenues, celebrated its 275th issue, which included among other elegant pieces Stephen Jay Gould's love song to Gilbert and Sullivan, "The True Embodiment of Everything That's Excellent."

And, indeed, at their best that's what these periodicals are—the embodiment of everything that's excellent. How discordant, then, is the note sounded by the US Postal Service, which has proposed a rate increase that would penalize publications like *Harper's* and *The American Scholar*. Here at *The Nation* it would raise mailing costs by 18.6 percent, or \$140,000. That's what the paper for nineteen issues costs us; our annual editorial budget for freelance writers is \$250,000.

As we told the Postal Rate Commission in 1995, when it was considering a proposal to eliminate second-class mail entirely, we believe that the Founding Fathers correctly saw the dissemination of opinion as the precondition of self-governance. That's why George Washington himself believed that all newspapers, which in those days were the equivalent of journals of opinion, should be delivered free. Maybe someday e-mail will make that possible, but right now the postal system continues to constitute the circulatory system of our democracy.

COMMENT

Fujimori's 'Victory'

Lima

As President Alberto Fujimori dropped his ballot into the box during Peru's charade of an election on May 28, it was hard to escape the feeling that this smiling dictator believed he had finally reached the objective he has been working for since 1992, when he shut down Congress and took direct control of the courts: a one-party state. The fact that he achieved this goal thanks to a boycott of the election by the opposition didn't seem to lessen or cheapen the victory for him. The television channels, every one of them allied with Fujimori except for a cable station that fewer than 5 percent of Peruvians can see, merrily reported that the President had won the runoff election with about 80 percent of the "valid votes." Not until the next day did they report that he actually won barely 50 percent, according to the official count, when ballots that voters had intentionally spoiled were factored in. "Massive turnout at the polls," announced one station, neglecting

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to mention that if you don't vote in Peru your identity papers are nullified unless you pay a fine equal to about one-third of a monthly minimum wage. There were no independent observers for this election; they all refused to participate because it was so obviously rigged. The morning after the election, Fujimori's Cabinet gathered to congratulate the President on his "overwhelming victory."

Yet just when his power should be at its high-water mark, it's clear to many Peruvians that this election may well have planted the seeds of Fujimori's downfall. For the first time in his ten years in office, Fujimori now has a formidable challenger, Alejandro Toledo, with international connections, the power to draw crowds and an unnerving way of shaking off the smear campaigns of the progovernment yellow press. Toledo, an articulate Stanford-educated economist from a poor background, does not seriously challenge Fujimori's neoliberal economic policies, though he gives them a more populist spin.

Toledo called on his supporters to boycott the election or scribble "No to fraud" on their ballots. Vote counters found fistfuls of these defaced ballots, which, when added to the votes for Toledo (who was still on the ballot) and those who didn't vote at all, surpassed 50 percent of Peru's registered voters. "This election is null and void," Toledo told a crowd estimated at about 60,000 in Lima's Plaza San Martín that night. The plaza shook with chants of "*Sin democracia, no hay solución!*" and "*Queremos democracia!*" All but one of the major candidates from the first round were there on the stage with Toledo. Events at the plaza were virtually ignored by local television channels.

By refusing to participate in the election and getting a large share of Peruvians to do the same, Toledo has called Fujimori's bluff. Fujimori has kept enough of a veneer of democracy to prevent Washington from cutting him off and to keep the support of international creditors, but that veneer has grown thinner every year. Now Toledo has stripped it away and shown that Fujimori can no longer say he serves at the pleasure of his people. If Fujimori can dominate the media, get TV stations to refuse to broadcast his opponents' advertising, hand out everything from land titles to laptops at his rallies and still win only 50 percent—if you believe the official counts—he has big problems. Add to that international isolation, and it's hard to see how he can carry on for a five-year term without at least calling new elections.

Toledo is not the perfect spokesman for the anti-Fujimori movement. He's prone to rash statements under pressure and has an embarrassing habit of comparing himself to Martin Luther King Jr., Corazon Aquino and Gandhi. Many Latin Americans assume he has US support or even that he is some kind of creation of *El Tío Sam* to keep Fujimori in line. This is an impression that Fujimori's Vice President, Francisco Tudela, has done his utmost to foster. It's true that Toledo has made much of his career in the States, but when he came to Washington in April, not a single senior official met with him. President Clinton waited until forty-eight hours before the runoff election to announce that relations with Peru would "inevitably be affected" by Fujimori's refusal to postpone the elections, as the OAS and Toledo had long urged.

The truth is that the United States would rather not see Fujimori go. He has cooperated on drug trafficking and cut coca production by about two-thirds since taking office, according to

Lima. In the chaotic Andean region, with Colombia in civil war, Ecuador changing presidents faster than socks and Venezuela looking more and more shaky under President Hugo Chávez, Fujimori's Peru has been a prickly but stable ally. Washington sent a clear message recently by replacing outspoken Ambassador to Peru Dennis Jett, who irritated Fujimori and was liked by his opponents, with a lower-profile diplomat. The State Department backtracked after initially calling the election illegitimate and invalid, reportedly in deference to the OAS, which was considering what action to take. Fujimori is gambling that he can ride out the international criticism.

In Latin America, however, semiclosed systems from Mexico to Chile are yielding to pressure to open up. What the 60,000 people in Plaza San Martín proved was that once people get a taste of democracy, it's not as easy to take it away as the Fujimoris of the world might suppose.

ROGER ATWOOD

Roger Atwood has written about Peru for various publications.

A New Model Ford

What's in a name? Sometimes plenty. If he were not the great-grandson of the founder, it's inconceivable that Ford Motor Company chairman William C. Ford could have issued the extraordinary *nostra culpa* he did at Ford's annual shareholder meeting on May 11. Ford's admission that sport utility vehicles pose serious environmental and safety hazards must have struck the company's old guard as dangerous blasphemy.

So, is William Ford to be taken seriously? Since assuming chairmanship of the company in 1999 at age 42, he has pledged to change Ford's corporate culture to reflect his professed environmental beliefs. He has spoken in favor of hybrid-electric and other "green" cars and urged that Ford's SUVs emit no more smog-producing exhaust than do conventional cars. But none of his previous actions rival his May 11 statement for boldness, candor or potential impact on his own company and the industry at large.

The faults of SUVs are, of course, well-known. Because their huge size condemns them to very poor gasoline mileage, SUVs contribute about twice as much to global warming as conventional cars, and they emit up to 5.5 times as much ground-level smog. What's more, they are three times as likely as cars to kill the other driver in a crash. In releasing Ford's first "corporate citizenship report," William Ford pledged to address these problems, but he stressed that his company would continue to produce SUVs in the meantime. Market realities leave no other choice, he explained. Consumers want the product (SUVs account for roughly half of all new US vehicle purchases), and the profit margins are too great to pass up. Although SUVs account for 20 percent of Ford's sales, they are responsible for more than 50 percent of total profits.

Ford's surprise announcement made front-page headlines across the nation, and rightly so. How often is it that the head of a major corporation tells the truth about what he sells? The only comparable example is the Liggett Group's 1997 admission that cigarettes are addictive and cause cancer. Which brings us to the most intriguing, and potentially explosive, aspect of Ford's

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remarks. In an interview with the *New York Times*, he explained that he was speaking out because he worried that if auto makers ignored the SUV's problems, they could wind up with a reputation like the tobacco industry's. "The court of public opinion sometimes decides before you're ready for them to decide, and I want to make sure we're ready and ahead of the curve," he said.

Ford's lawyers must have flipped when they read this tobacco analogy. Surely the lawyers realized that Ford's very public admission of the hazards of SUVs could open the door to lawsuits against the company. Did they communicate this fear to the chairman? Did he consider their objections and go ahead anyway? Already, a letter to the editor urging suits against auto makers for environmental and health damages of SUVs has appeared in the *Times*.

Ford's use of the tobacco industry analogy, and his virtual invitation of lawsuits against SUV-makers, suggest that his statement is no mere public relations stunt. To be sure, neither the man nor his company is above greenwashing; the company's exclusive sponsorship of *Time's* special Earth Day issue, for example, did not deter Ford from flying to Washington this past fall reportedly to lobby senators to vote against raising fuel efficiency standards, the single most important step government could take against global warming. But Ford's May 11 statement puts him on record as admitting that his company's leading product is bad for people, society and the planet. The company's subsequent announcement of a 25 percent production cut of the Ford Excursion SUV—which William Ford jokingly calls "The Ford Valdez"—for the 2001 model year suggests he may really be steering the company in a more responsible direction. For that, he deserves praise and encouragement, especially when compared with General Motors, which plans to increase SUV production by 20 percent next year.

Ford says he was led to speak out by the growing criticism of SUVs, for which citizens can thank the Sierra Club, the Union of Concerned Scientists and the *Times*. But much more pressure will be needed before SUVs are really brought to heel. Ford is right in saying that market realities do not allow the company to stop producing SUVs unilaterally. But market realities can be changed. Activists and lawyers can begin suing auto makers for

SUV-related damages. Consumers can withdraw their purchasing power from SUVs and transfer it to cleaner, safer alternatives. And politicians can greatly tighten regulation of SUVs, even as they accelerate the shift to green cars by reforming government subsidy and procurement policies.

Of course, these are partial remedies. To overcome our collective auto addiction will require a major increase in mass transit and an overhaul of the land-use policies that create the suburban sprawl that make cars an American necessity. But so basic a social transformation cannot occur overnight. Ford's surprising announcement has opened great new possibilities for reshaping our auto-dependent culture. The rest of us should make the most of them.

MARK HERTSGAARD

Mark Hertsgaard, a commentator for National Public Radio's Living on Earth, is the author of Earth Odyssey: Around the World in Search of Our Environmental Future (Broadway).

Block That Rush!

suppose it would be in my financial interest if Rush Limbaugh were to get his wish and become part of the broadcast team for ABC's *Monday Night Football*. My book *Rush Limbaugh Is a Big Fat Idiot* is still backlisted, and Rush's presence on prime time would probably help sales by reminding millions of people who had otherwise forgotten what a smug jerk he is.

The thing is, I'm a football fan. I watch *Monday Night Football*. Please, please, *pleeeeeeze*, ABC, don't make me have to listen to Rush. See, when I was researching my book, I listened to Rush. A lot. And once I finished my research, I frankly hoped that I'd never have to hear his voice again.

By the way, it's not so much Rush's politics. If, say, Steve Largent quit Congress (which wouldn't be such a bad idea), I'd be happy to listen to him call *Monday Night Football*. Let me explain why: Steve Largent knows a lot about football.

Recently on a Fox News Channel program devoted to this subject, I made the point that Rush has absolutely no experience in pro football. The anchor, whom I will not embarrass by naming him/her, took issue by saying, "But he did marketing for the Royals." Rush *did*, in fact, work in group sales for the Kansas City Royals, the American League *baseball* team. As FNC says, "We report, you decide."

Rush did, however, play high school football. In fact, Limbaugh has said that he received his 4F physical deferment from the draft because of "a football knee from high school." Which is actually not true. In reality, Rush got his deferment because of a pilonidal cyst, which is a congenital incomplete closure of the neural groove at the base of the spinal cord in which excess tissue and hair may collect, causing discomfort and discharge. Not as sexy as a football knee, but a pilonidal cyst it was.

This is more to the point of why I don't want Rush on *MNF*. He's a liar. Not the Frank Gifford type, who merely lies about consensual sex, which, though an impeachable offense, gives me no reason to doubt a yards-per-carry statistic Frank might throw at us. (And unlike Limbaugh, Gifford does not call himself "America's

CALVIN TRILLIN

THE MAN WHO WON NAFTA EMERGES VICTORIOUS ON CHINA TRADE

So Clinton's found the key once more
To triumphs he can savor:
He takes the lead on issues that
Republicans all favor.

COMMENT

Truth Detector.") In Rush's world, "there is no conclusive proof that nicotine is addictive." "All income groups paid less taxes as a percentage of their income during the Reagan years, but the poor received the most relief, the middle class the next and the rich, the least." And "there are more acres of forestland in America today than when Columbus discovered the continent in 1492." I had considered titling my book *Rush Limbaugh is a Big Fat Hypocritical Liar*. But I thought that was just too confrontational.

Which brings me to the "big fat" part. When Rush was last on TV regularly, he was very, very, very fat. And that, I think, is one of the reasons he wants the *MNF* job. Since my book came out, Rush has lost a lot of weight, and I don't blame him for wanting America to see that he is no longer, as doctors put it, "morbidly obese." The reality is, I saved the man's life, halting his slide into food-assisted suicide. Has he thanked me? No.

Besides being an ingrate, Limbaugh is also a lout. In 1993 he called 13-year-old Chelsea Clinton "the White House dog." If he does *MNF*, I doubt he'll say anything as racist as Howard Cosell's "look at that little monkey go," referring during a 1983 Monday night game to Alvin Garrett, a black receiver for the Redskins. Rush takes great affront at being called a racist, though that didn't stop him from making this observation a few years ago: "Have you ever noticed how all newspaper composite pictures of wanted criminals resemble Jesse Jackson?"

Rush does like to accuse others of racism, particularly anyone

in the Clinton Administration. According to Limbaugh, the "midnight basketball" provision in the President's 1994 crime bill was racist. "At a time when the black community is struggling with the notion that the route out of the ghetto is the National Basketball Association and a Nike pair of shoes, here comes the Administration...and they say to parents, 'Hey, we solved your problem. We're going to have your kids playing basketball midnight to 2 AM... Wouldn't it just be simpler to expand the NBA to 500,000 teams?'"

Presumably Rush on *MNF* will be driving home the idea that the NFL and a pair of Nikes is a better way out of the ghetto. Of course, Rush's real problem was with the federal government spending a few million dollars on a program that would provide supervised recreation and job training to poor teens and young adults. Better for taxpayers to spend hundreds of millions on stadiums with corporate boxes. (To be fair to Rush, I support all of the above.)

But again, in regard to the *MNF* job, it's not really Limbaugh's politics that I object to. For instance, former *MNF* commentator Dan Dierdorf is a member of the Socialist Workers Party. The fact that you probably don't know that shows how well he was able to keep it out of his color commentary. I just want to be able to watch my *Monday Night Football* with the sound on. AL FRANKEN

Al Franken is a comedian.

In Fact...

TAKING ON BIG MoMA

Matthew Roth writes: For culturati who don't believe in crossing a picket line, it's New York's Museum of Modern Art's hottest no-show. For nearly a month now striking members of UAW Local 2110 have been picketing MoMA. The issues, poorly reported in the local press, are pay equity and corporatization of the nonprofit world. The starting salary for the local's members—administrative assistants, archivists, graphic artists, librarians, bookstore salespeople, writers and curatorial staff (predominantly women)—is as low as \$17,000 a year, which hardly pays the rent on a decent flat in Gotham. Their median salary is \$28,000. Art handlers, who package and transport exhibits, earn an entry-level salary of \$32,000; guards start at \$24,000 and make a guaranteed \$30,000 within two and a half years. (The handlers and guards are mostly male.) Maida Rosenstein, president of Local 2110, says that the museum uses its 501(c)(3) not-for-profit status as "a justification for low wages. They have a half-billion-dollar endowment; they, like many other non-profits, have done nicely in the stock market; and they have begun raising funds to launch a for-profit dot.com company." The union is demanding that its members' starting salary be raised to \$20,000 a year with an annual pay increase of 4 or 5 percent. It also wants a new five-year contract to insure that members will be able to

get their jobs back after being laid off for a four-year renovation project beginning later this year. The museum offers minimal pay hikes and will guarantee only a three-year contract, opening up the possibility of replacing the present workers. According to the union, the picket line has received strong support from members and visitors alike. Artists whose work is being shown have refused to cross. The picketers stopped Sheryl Crow from playing a museum benefit and have sent to the director a petition signed by hundreds of supporters urging a quick settlement. Unfortunately, some well-known liberals have crossed the line, including Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Al Gore confidant Steve Rattner, who attended a media conference at MoMA in early May.

NIGERIAN DELTA GAMES

Last year two villages in the oil-rich Niger Delta region of southeastern Nigeria were attacked and burned to the ground by Nigerian troops using boats and helicopters owned by Chevron Oil Company. The incidents brought international attention once again to the Nigerian military and its human rights abuses. Attention, it seems, from everyone but the US military. Ron Nixon reports that the Center for Strategic Leadership at the US Army War College was to hold a series of military games

May 31 to June 1 focusing on "developing new engagement opportunities with, and alternative roles for, the Nigerian Military" in support of Nigerian government efforts to deal with tensions in the delta. Policy-makers from State, Energy and the EPA will participate, as well as oil companies and several nongovernmental organizations. According to a spokesman, no Nigerians were invited. He said the games will not involve actual troops but will take place in seminars where participants will be presented with different scenarios for potential conflicts and help come up with solutions. Nigerian groups in the delta say they are concerned about the US focus on military actions instead of dealing with more pressing political and social needs. They are also concerned about the lack of participation by anyone from the delta in the games. "We don't know what the implications are, but we don't think this is where the effort ought to be going," said Ledum Mitee of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. "The military seems to be operating the same way it did under the dictatorships, and that's the problem." Cindy Cohn, a California attorney representing residents of the Niger Delta in a lawsuit against Chevron, agrees: "It's disturbing—a further militarization of the situation in the Niger Delta. It's the single worst thing to try to do to end the tensions there."

ALEXANDER COCKBURN

The End of Southern California

There are thousands of vistas in America affording material for sermons on the folly and greed of man, but few so stark and wretched as San Diego County, now distinguished by having the highest rate of habitat loss and more endangered plant and animal species than any county in the United States. The butchery has accelerated hotly in the Clinton/Gore era, with the developers unleashed by a dreadful instrument of the "win-win" school of regulation (Multi-Species Conservation Plan, in their language), now supervised by Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt. "Win-win" means developers get the prime habitat and endangered species get a culvert ("wildlife corridor").

By the mid-nineties, Southern California's coastal sage scrub had almost disappeared; so had 97 percent of the vernal pools. Southern maritime chaparral had been reduced to 2,400 acres in the United States, with 400 of these on Carmel Mountain just west of what is now one of the largest freeway interchanges in California. The chaparral has gone, and so too, as a site for anything but high-priced real estate, has poor, bulldozer-carved Carmel Mountain.

So far as coastal habitat in Southern California is concerned, the destruction is virtually complete, but head south from Los Angeles, turn east after Oceanside and head for Ramona or Julian. You'll discover that at the heart of San Diego County are mountains forming a blue wall between the coast and the deep desert. Rising to these peaks, and buffering them from the cities, are the magnificent rolling grasslands and oak-covered foothills of what San Diegans call the back country, its pastures carrying not only cattle but live oak and golden eagles, profuse other bird life, cougar. The country looks dry but is an enormously important watershed, supplying the coastal cities with as much as 15 percent of their water.

Right now the real estate market in California is so feverish that the big ranches are ripe targets for "development" the minute they are rezoned out of agricultural designation and onto the open market. Given the power of the developers this transition from cattle baronies to real estate cash should have been easy, were it not for the efforts of a small group of environmentalists.

Over the past ten years, Save Our Forest and Ranchlands (SOFAR), run by Duncan McFetridge, a woodworker living in Descanso, forty miles east of San Diego, has been waging a stubborn campaign against the suburbanization of the back country. We're not talking firebrands here. We're talking League of Women Voters, surfers, San Diego Baykeeper and assorted defenders of snakes, salamanders, lions and oaks. SOFAR put together a coalition of enviro and community groups and sued the county for failing to protect the back country. In 1996 Superior Court Judge Judith McConnell found San Diego County grossly negligent and in violation of several state laws and its own environmental standards. McConnell gave tiny SOFAR authority over hundreds of thousands of back-country acres.

Finally, earlier this year, the county came up with a plan. It



assumed the destruction of all the 200,000 acres of rangelands, with division of this savaged terrain into ten- and forty-acre parcels, demurely described as small farms. This pleasing vision of mom and pop truck farms raising mangoes, orchids and macadamia nuts (the Farm Bureau's disingenuous version) collides with the reality that this part of San Diego County has no ground water suitable for such specialty farming, and little other infrastructure.

The real future under the county plan would be luxury ranchettes and theme parks linked by new freeways and serviced by off-ramp commerce. In other words, exactly the sort of unsmart growth that everyone from Vice President Gore to the San Diego Association of Governments has been complaining about.

Not to be defeated, SOFAR and its allies brought the new plan to the attention of the Environmental Protection Agency. On March 31 Nancy Woo, the agency's regional chief, sent a letter to the San Diego County supervisors, also to Mayor Susan Golding, advising them that the plan threatened the quality and quantity of the region's water and would gravely affect air, endangered wildlife and open space. Woo's letter threw the county officials into desperation. It looked as though the scheming of years had gone for naught. Then, at the last minute, came an amazing gift from the EPA. Five days later, on the eve of a crucial April 5 county meeting, Woo rushed another letter to the frantic San Diego officials. She said she had misinterpreted the plan and that her first letter should be disregarded.

In fact, Woo had not misinterpreted any significant part of the plan. But crucially, in her second letter she did not advise the board to withhold approval pending further study. The supervisors were off the hook and delightedly passed the amendment that could mean San Diego's back country will disappear into condoland, interspersed with Indian casinos. But the game is not quite over. Because the county is still under court supervision, the plan can't go ahead until Judge McConnell signs off on it.

So here we have a major environmental disaster in the making, one that is an obvious test case for any supposed commitment by local, state and federal government to bar insane squandering of natural resources. We have county government acting as a creature of the big developers. We have a weak regulatory agency, with the nature-rapers held in check only by a stubborn group like SOFAR.

This is but one episode in a dire national story. I don't want to be construed as offering endorsement or encouragement, but what drives groups like Earth Liberation Front to court lifetime prison sentences by burning a ski-condo development in Vail, or Boise Cascade offices in Oregon? The people who drive them to it, who are convinced that the fix is in, that the government is always bought, have been these past eight years men like Gore and Babbitt, so much more supple and therefore dangerous than Reagan's Interior Secretary James Watt, who was such a dunderhead he set back the course of environmental destruction by a decade. ■

PATRICIA J. WILLIAMS

Little House in the 'Hood

I was wandering around Harlem recently, late on a warm Sunday afternoon: I saw Dominican families chatting on stoops. I saw African-American families walking home from church. I saw a Cuban-Chinese deli and popped in to buy a refreshing something-or-other that resembled a mango egg cream. I saw a busload of Japanese tourists. And I saw lots of young white families unloading weekend gear from Jeep Cherokees lacquered with Bridgehampton beach stickers, their tanned and tousled children wearing sweatshirts with the names of the world's most expensive private schools emblazoned upon them. It was a pleasant stroll, the sort of thing that makes me glad to be living in New York. Indeed, at this particular moment, Harlem may be the most racially, ethnically and class-integrated neighborhood in the world. This is good news. The question, of course, is whether it will stay that way.

As with all of Manhattan, Harlem's real estate prices have suddenly gone through the roof. Burned-out shells of brownstones go for half a million, while pristine specimens are listed in Sotheby's International. Like most, I am glad for the increased desirability of a Harlem ZIP code. But I wonder if there are not a few cautionary reminders one might bring to bear.

The most obvious concern, as one reads breathless newspaper accounts of square footage, is a certain otherworldliness in tone. "Urban pioneers" is the term most often used to describe the largely white families who are moving into this historically black area. No matter that Harlem has always had a substantial black middle class, a stable working class and eminently respectable social systems; the popular imagery is that of brave white settlers in their SUVs (doors locked, windows up) traveling in cautious cavalades to homestead the wild, heathen emptiness.

By all accounts, Harlem is "in transition." If one pokes at that terminology just a little bit—transition from what to what?—one uncovers rather broad assumptions that Harlem is progressing from a state of "blight"; that it is being "redeemed" with new faces, new stores, new investment; and that its ultimate destiny is to be "reclaimed" by those who have made the rest of Manhattan so trendy that an average apartment now costs well over \$700,000.

I guess I hope for a number of things. First, I hope that gentrification stops short of Trumpification. As invisible as it has been to many, Harlem's class diversity has always contributed to its vibrant social, cultural and political life.

Second, I hope the new movement to Harlem signals a reversal of the abandonment of inner cities. I hope it signals an era of racial diversity, true tolerance for propinquity and not merely the corollary of white flight—the strategic displacement of black and brown populations. I do not mean to impugn the neighborliness of any of the new residents of Harlem. I am more concerned about the larger institutional manipulations that have contributed to the stark consequences both of white flight and, now, white reflux.

When Northern whites grew afraid of the migrations of blacks from the South from the thirties through the seventies, it was the

DIARY OF A MAD LAW PROFESSOR



National Association of Realtors that calculatedly fanned that fear into a panic, realtors going door to door warning that the property values were falling, falling: Sell now while you can. In city after city, the story was the same: Whites, terrified that the end of civilization was nigh, sold low. Blacks, believing they were purchasing the dream of integration, bought high. The realtors made a killing. The newly segregated neighborhoods went into quick decline as services of all sorts were summarily withdrawn—schools, snow removal, grocery stores, bus lines,

police. Banks wouldn't finance home repairs; assessments plummeted; crimes went uninvestigated and thus flourished. Insurers, if they insured at all, charged sky-high rates supposedly based on greater risk, then failed to pay for actual losses.

Today a new breed of real estate speculator has fanned the "buzz" that is changing Harlem so rapidly. Thanks to complicated incentive programs and community empowerment zoning, banks, too, have begun funneling money back into communities that they had historically redlined. But the degree to which these new financial policies improve the lot of Harlem's low, moderate and middle-income populations—or simply drive them out—remains to be seen.

In recent months the City of New York has sold many of its Harlem properties to developers whose interests do not always overlap with those of longtime residents. Consider the tension: I have friends struggling to find immediate financing for the house they have lived in for thirty years. I, on the other hand, received a form letter offering Columbia University faculty very favorable loan terms for housing in Harlem.

In this rush to go upscale, I hope that policy experts and institutional investors do not diminish—with such terms as "blighted"—the role of long-term stable populations, whose insistent struggles have produced the lion's share of the recent turnaround. In using the word "stable" one is often understood to mean church-going, college-educated, middle-class residents with steady incomes. But by "stable" I also mean to include working-class and poor families, people with extended families, with several adults in and out of work, homes where a grandparent or aunt helps make ends meet by looking after their own and the neighbors' children. These are the populations who suffered most from the lack of local grocery stores, for example, and who pressed for the new Fairway market in Harlem—a store so magnificent that Wall Streeters travel the length of the city to stock up on guavas and fresh rabbit filets. These are the families who suffered simultaneously from high crime rates and suspect profiling and whose protests made policing tactics a national issue. These are Manhattan's messengers, hospital workers, fast-food servers, secretaries, janitors, nannies and security guards whose tenacious political passion about issues such as education, healthcare and garbage removal have made them models of community engagement.

For all these good things, greater credit—both literally and figuratively—is most assuredly their due. ■

ERIC ALTERMAN

Exacting 'the Price of Liberty...'

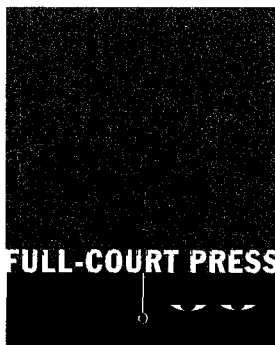
Generals and admirals often tell us that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, but they sure don't appreciate being on its business end. Armies like war for many reasons, one of which is that journalists tend to report them so uncritically. Battles are logistically difficult to cover; censorship, formal and informal, is rampant; and patriotic fervor tends to trump standard-issue reportorial skepticism. It can take decades to rescue the truth from so much propaganda so easily swallowed. And that's when the real fight begins.

Currently, the Pentagon finds itself under fire on three journalistic fronts: from a Pulitzer Prize-winning AP report on an alleged July 1950 massacre in South Korea; a *Newsweek* exclusive about the ineffectiveness of the 1999 Kosovo air war; and a thirty-four-page Sy Hersh exposé in *The New Yorker* of an alleged massacre of Iraqi prisoners by the Army's 24th Infantry Division—then commanded by our present drug czar, Gen. Barry McCaffrey—two days after the February 28, 1991, Gulf War cease-fire.

In the Korea case, diligent AP reporters discovered that anywhere from 100 to 300 refugees, including women and children, had been executed by US machine-gun fire over a three-day period in late July 1950 beneath a bridge in the village of No Gun Ri. Although some of the witnesses' reliability has been successfully challenged in lengthy, promilitary rebuttals by the website www.stripes.com and by *US News & World Report*—leading one of them to admit that he was not at the scene despite his previous claims—the overall story of the massacre has held up. The Pulitzer board therefore reaffirmed its decision, and the Pentagon has been forced to open its own investigation, having finally admitted that “hundreds” of innocent people were killed.

In the case of Kosovo, *Newsweek's* John Barry and Evan Thomas reported in mid-May that Air Force investigators had learned that the target kill numbers in Kosovo trumpeted by NATO after the war were entirely fictional, but it was covering up the evidence. At the close of the war, Defense Secretary William Cohen announced the destruction of “more than 50 percent of the [Serb]...artillery and one-third of the armored vehicles.” Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Gen. Henry Shelton tallied up approximately 120 tanks, 220 armored personnel carriers and “up to 450 artillery and mortar pieces.” But a suppressed report—finally released after *Newsweek* forced the Pentagon's hand—found evidence for only fourteen tanks, eighteen armored personnel carriers and twenty artillery pieces. Instead of 744 “confirmed” strikes by NATO pilots, only fifty-eight really took place. The Pentagon later commissioned another report boosting those numbers—which it prefers to discuss—but the sad fact is that during the war, the only source for remotely accurate figures was the enemy, the Serbs.

While most news organizations did cover the Pentagon's red-faced admissions, the stories got nothing like the prominent placement of NATO's false boasts. Curiously, the *Newspaper of Record* ignored it entirely, even though it had already done some



of the most energetic reporting on the ground on this topic. A June 28 *Times* report last year, for instance, noted that “NATO's warplanes had not destroyed Yugoslavia's front-line fighting vehicles [as claimed], but rather a junkyard.” A September 17 report by Craig Whitney from Brussels looked at the numbers a second time, only to reinforce the higher totals. But according to assistant Washington editor Thom Shanker, its editors decided that the Air Force tally did not add much to the paper's original reporting, a decision the paper

stands by. As a result, *Times* readers ended up with a vastly exaggerated impression of the war's effectiveness—just as the Pentagon wished them to.

The most dramatic of these virtual firefights is that between Sy Hersh and General McCaffrey over the so-called Battle of Rumaylah. The charges and countercharges in Hersh's 25,000-word opus are too much to address in detail here. What is obvious to any impartial observer, however, is that while Hersh's 300 interviews yielded an enormous amount of evidence—including a remarkable number of on-the-record quotations from officers and infantrymen on the scene—McCaffrey has responded almost entirely with unsubstantiated character assassination.

In a flurry of television appearances and in a vitriolic *Wall Street Journal* editorial, McCaffrey accused Hersh of “journalistic stalking,” of making up statements and of being motivated by a desire to damage McCaffrey's burgeoning drug war in Colombia. But he neglected to furnish any evidence. The charge itself, says the general, is “nonsense” that was “investigated 10 years ago” and constitutes “revisionist history.” But if it's “nonsense,” why has it been investigated four times? How convincing is it to be cleared by the same military authorities who have engaged in successful cover-ups in the past? (Does the phrase “Gulf of Tonkin” ring a bell?) Indeed, Hersh devotes roughly a third of his article to the deficiencies of those very investigations. And finally, what's so terrible about revisionist history? Why shouldn't we revise our historical understandings when we discover new evidence?

Most alarming of all, McCaffrey aide David Shull faxed various human rights groups pleading, “Would ask for your help to discredit the Hersh article from your personal perspective.” And in a slimy ad hominem, White House spokesman Joe Lockhart called the piece “an attempt to gratuitously go after public officials and an attempt to try to revive a journalist's career.”

Yes, war is a nasty business, and murderous mistakes and horrific crimes come with the territory. Many military officers consider the media the enemy and see no shame in falsifying the truth, as they exaggerate their successes to increase budget and prestige. Usually they get away with it, but now that AP and Hersh & Co. have redeemed the profession, at least in these cases, Congress should immediately undertake its own investigations of Kosovo and Kuwait. The price of our liberty demands nothing less. ■

ARTICLES

If you stopped worrying about the bomb when the cold war ended, you were probably surprised to learn that two of the hot-button issues of the eighties—arms control and missile defense—will top the agenda at the Clinton/Putin summit on June 4–5. A central issue in Moscow will be how to reconcile Russian President Vladimir Putin's proposal for deep cuts in US and Russian nuclear arsenals with the Clinton Administration's fixation on developing a National Missile Defense (NMD) system.

Clinton has pledged to make a deployment decision this fall, after the Pentagon and the White House analyze the results of the next "hit to kill" test of the missile defense system, slated for late June or early July. The system failed its most recent test, conducted in January, while an allegedly successful test conducted last October was made possible only by the fact that the kill vehicle was guided to the right spot by a large, easy-to-find decoy balloon.

The Clinton/Gore proposal is a far cry from Ronald Reagan's Star Wars scheme, which was designed to fend off thousands of Soviet warheads at a cost estimated by former Wisconsin Senator William Proxmire at up to \$1 trillion. In contrast, this missile defense plan is meant to deal with a few dozen incoming warheads launched by a "rogue state" like North Korea, at a projected cost of \$60 billion. But despite the NMD's seemingly more modest goals, it is every bit as dangerous and misguided as the Reagan scheme, threatening to unravel thirty years of arms-control agreements and heighten the danger of nuclear war.

NMD's surprising political revival is rooted in the three Cs of contemporary US politics: conservative ideology, Clintonian cowardice and corporate influence. These short-term pressures are in turn reinforced by an ambitious long-range military objective: the misguided quest for a state of absolute military superiority.

The strongest push for missile defense has come from Reaganite true believers in conservative think tanks, especially the small but highly effective Center for Security Policy. On Capitol Hill, the NMD lobby is spearheaded by new-look conservatives like Senator Jon Kyl of Arizona, who led last fall's successful Re-

publican effort to defeat the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Fresh from that victory, the NMD lobby is now seeking to destroy the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty as the next target in its campaign to promote "peace through strength rather than peace through paper," as Kyl put it in a recent speech.

The right-wing crusade for missile defense has received aid and comfort from Bill Clinton and Al Gore, who have decided that looking "tough" on defense is more important than protecting

the world from weapons of mass destruction. Support has also come from the lumbering behemoths of the military-industrial complex: Lockheed Martin, Raytheon and Boeing, which are desperately seeking a new infusion of taxpayer funds to help them recover from a string of technical failures and management fiascos that have cut their stock prices and drastically reduced their profit margins.

NMD's military boosters see the system primarily as a way to enhance the offensive capabilities of US forces, not as a defensive measure. In its revealing "Vision for 2020" report, the US Space Command—a unified military command that coordinates the space activities and assets of the Army, Navy and Air Force—sings the praises of outer space as the ideal platform for projecting US military dominance "across the full spectrum of conflict." Pentagon hard-liners have a more immediate military goal: using NMD as a shield to protect US forces in interventions against states like North Korea (whose missile

development effort, it is worth noting, has been on hold for almost two years).

A growing number of moderate-to-conservative Democrats are also supportive of a limited NMD system. Whether or not missile defense is an effective response to alleged threats, it seems to offer a sense of security to some members of Congress, who lack the expertise and inclination to question the fevered threat projections of the US military and intelligence establishments.

While at least some of the motives of NMD advocates may be understandable, they are also disastrously misguided: Even Clinton and Gore's "limited" system is unnecessary, unworkable and unaffordable. The mere pursuit of an NMD system could pose



by **WILLIAM D. HARTUNG**
and **MICHELLE CIARROCCA**

the most serious threat to international peace and stability since the height of the cold war. Russian President Putin has emphatically stated that any US move to withdraw from the ABM treaty will lead Moscow to treat all existing US/Russian arms agreements as null and void. And China's chief arms negotiator, Sha Zukang, has warned that if Washington goes ahead with an NMD deployment designed to intercept "tens of warheads"—a figure suspiciously close to the eighteen to twenty single-warhead ballistic missiles that represent China's *entire* nuclear deterrent capability—Beijing will not "sit on its hands."

In short, the official Clinton/Gore Administration position on NMD is that we should jeopardize the best chance in a generation to reduce the world's nuclear arsenals in order to preserve the option to deploy a costly, technically dubious scheme designed to defend against a Third World missile threat that does not currently exist and may not ever materialize. To understand how we got into this mess, we need to take a look at the genesis, "death" and resurrection of Reagan's Star Wars dream.

A Smile and a Shoeshine

When Reagan gave his March 1983 Star Wars speech, in which he pledged to launch a program designed to render nuclear weapons "impotent and obsolete," he was acting primarily on the advice of Edward Teller, the infamous "father of the H-bomb." In closed-door meetings organized by the conservative businessmen in Reagan's kitchen Cabinet, Teller sold Reagan on a new nuclear doctrine of "assured survival" based on the alleged technical wonders of his latest brainchild, the X-ray laser. As *New York Times* science writer William Broad pointed out in his 1992 book, *Teller's War*, the X-ray laser was largely a figment of Teller's imagination, composed of scientific speculation, wishful thinking and outright deception. But Reagan was buying into the concept of missile defense, not the details, so he forged ahead unaware of these inconvenient facts, his enthusiasm reinforced by his desire to counter the nuclear freeze movement.

But, as Frances FitzGerald shows in her new book, *Way Out There in the Blue* (the title derives from Arthur Miller's line in *Death of a Salesman* in which he describes Willy Loman as "a man way out there in the blue, riding on a smile and a shoeshine"), Reagan's Star Wars proposal was more than just a political con game; it was also a potent symbol that served radically different purposes for the different factions within his Administration. For hard-liners like Caspar Weinberger, Richard Perle and Frank Gaffney—a Perle protégé who went on to found his own pro-Star Wars think tank, the Center for Security Policy—Reagan's missile defense plan offered a chance to promote their two main goals: sustaining the Reagan military buildup and

thwarting progress on US/Soviet arms control. For White House political strategists, the Star Wars plan was a way to boost Reagan's flagging popularity ratings, which had plummeted in the face of the deepest recession since the thirties and a growing fear that the President's aggressive anti-Soviet stance was moving the world to the brink of a nuclear confrontation.

The most constructive response to the Star Wars speech within Reagan's inner circle came from his Secretary of State, George Shultz. Rather than trying to convince Reagan of the manifold flaws in his pet project, Shultz treated the Star Wars speech as an opportunity to press Reagan to engage in his first

Star Wars was a security blanket that allowed Reagan to negotiate with the 'evil empire' without being seen as a weak-kneed liberal.

serious discussions with Soviet leaders on nuclear weapons issues. Shultz found an unlikely ally in Paul Nitze, the old cold warrior who was appointed as a special envoy

to the US/Russian nuclear talks at Shultz's request. Nitze honed in on the fatal flaw that has plagued all missile defense schemes to date, which is that it is much cheaper to overwhelm a defensive system with additional warheads or decoys than it is to expand the defensive capability to meet these new threats. As a result, Shultz and Nitze were able to prevail over the Weinberger/Perle faction and persuade Reagan to endorse historic agreements to eliminate medium-range nuclear weapons from Europe and implement substantial cuts in long-range weapons under the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). Star Wars was a security blanket that allowed Reagan to engage in serious negotiations with the "evil empire" without being perceived as some sort of weak-kneed liberal arms controller among the conservatives who formed his core constituency.

When George Bush took office in January 1989, Reagan's Star Wars fantasy was rapidly overtaken by the reality of sharp reductions in the US and Soviet nuclear forces. Both sides ratified the START I arms reduction pact and followed up with a START II deal that called for cutting US and Soviet strategic arsenals to one-third their Reagan-era levels. On a broader front, the demise of the Warsaw Pact and the dissolution of the Soviet Union between 1989 and 1991 made spending billions on a high-tech scheme to defend against Soviet missiles seem irrelevant and absurd. Despite the decline of the Soviet "threat," however, the Bush Administration and Congress continued to cough up \$3–\$4 billion per year for missile defense. The project's new focus was protection against an accidental nuclear attack.

Soon yet another rationale appeared in the form of the "rogue state" strategy, developed by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Colin Powell, and based on the notion that the United States should be prepared to fight two heavily armed regional powers like Iraq and North Korea simultaneously. In the 1991 Gulf War Saddam Hussein came to personify the rogue-state threat; Iraqi missile attacks on Tel Aviv and a devastating direct hit on a US military barracks in Saudi Arabia prompted calls for more effective defenses against medium-range ballistic missiles.

But even that was not enough to sustain enthusiasm for a major new program. A few months after Clinton took office in January 1993, Defense Secretary Les Aspin proclaimed the Star Wars program dead (though the Pentagon continued to spend \$3–\$4 billion per year on missile defense research).

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Enter Newt

Newt Gingrich is gone from the political scene, but the most dangerous plank of his 1994 Contract With America remains: the section that calls for "requiring the Defense Department to deploy antiballistic missile systems capable of defending the United States against ballistic missile attacks." That plan was added to the contract by Gingrich and his fellow Republican co-author Dick Armey at the urging of Frank Gaffney of the Center for Security Policy.

Efforts to turn the contract's rhetoric into viable legislation proved unsuccessful in the short run, but in mid-1996 the Clinton Administration decided to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory by offering a missile defense compromise known as the "3+3" plan—three years of research and testing followed by a three-year crash program to deploy a system—if the President decided it was necessary, feasible and affordable. The "3+3" gambit allowed Clinton to push off a politically controversial decision on missile defense until a later date that fell well past the 1996 presidential election. Unfortunately for Al Gore, that "later date" is now smack in the middle of his second run for the White House. As John Pike of the Federation of American Scientists put it, "This is a political decision driven by the need to defend Al Gore from Republicans rather than defend America against missiles."

While Clinton was yielding ground, Capitol Hill Republicans were regrouping for their next offensive—one result of which was an amendment in the fiscal year 1997 defense authorization bill calling for the establishment of a blue-ribbon panel to "assess the nature and magnitude of existing and emerging ballistic missile threats to the United States." The Republicans wanted their new commission to be viewed as an authoritative and objective body, not just a partisan project. Bearing that in mind, House Speaker Gingrich and Senate majority leader Trent Lott, who were empowered to nominate the majority of the panel's members, chose former Ford Administration Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to head the commission, in the hopes that they could capitalize on his reputation as a moderate Republican with pragmatic views on military matters. Rumsfeld proved worthy of Gingrich's and Lott's confidence when he hammered out a unanimous final report with the appropriate aura of bipartisanship, complete with signatures from Democratic appointees such as former Carter Administration arms-control official Barry Blechman of the Henry L. Stimson Center and eminent physicist and longtime missile defense critic Richard Garwin. Just two weeks after the report came out, Garwin placed an Op-Ed in the *New York Times* denouncing the misuse of the report by missile defense boosters, asserting, "I am alarmed that some have interpreted our findings as providing support for a new national defense system."

The Rumsfeld Commission report was unveiled in July 1998 amid hysterical cries from Gingrich that it was the "most important warning about our national security system since the end of the cold war." Hysteria aside, the report's primary finding was that given enough foreign help, a rogue state like North Korea could acquire a missile capable of reaching the United States within five years of making a decision to do so—one-third to one-half the warning time projected in the CIA's official estimates. The Star Wars lobby finally got what it needed: an official, government-approved statement that could be interpreted as

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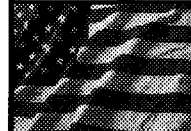
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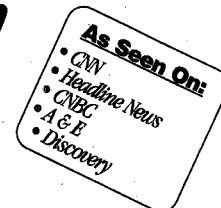
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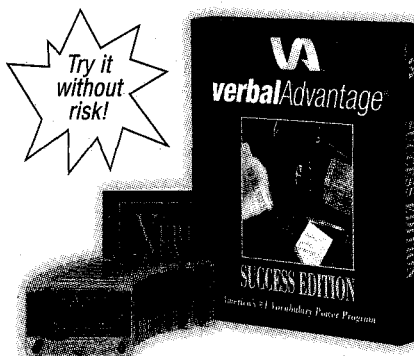
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endorsing its own exaggerated view of the Third World missile threat. While the Rumsfeld report drew heavy editorial fire in papers like the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Milwaukee Sentinel*, the *Wall Street Journal* applauded it as a long-overdue clarion call for missile defense, and Washington's newspaper of record, the *Post*, published a measured response that endorsed the panel's findings as "useful and plausible."

Inside the Missile Defense Lobby

Upon reflection, it is clear that the Rumsfeld report's Republican backers had always intended to use the panel as a tool to advance their pro-missile defense agenda. All the report actually says is that if a country like North Korea gets major foreign assistance—including the extremely unlikely possibility that a country like China would simply give Pyongyang a fully operational ballistic missile—it will achieve the capability to hit the United States much more quickly than if it had to build the missile without outside help. As Joseph Cirincione of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace demonstrated in Congressional testimony delivered this past February, the Rumsfeld Commission's conservative backers have used the report as a vehicle for changing the intelligence community's traditional means of assessing the ballistic missile threat, from one that attempts to predict the likely pace of missile proliferation in a given nation in the light of political, economic and military factors, to a "worst-case scenario" approach that asks how quickly a given nation could achieve a threatening missile capability if it had no economic or political impediments. As Cirincione also demonstrated, the "sky is falling" approach has been used to obscure the underlying reality that the ballistic missile threat to the United States has decreased in the last decade, not increased.

Just as the Rumsfeld Commission turned out to be less objective than it first appeared to be, so did its chairman. Far from being a moderate, Donald Rumsfeld is a card-carrying member of the missile defense lobby. Prior to his appointment to head the commission that bears his name, he was publicly singled out as a special friend in the annual report of the pro-Star Wars think tank, the Center for Security Policy. As a further sign of his commitment to the missile defense cause, Rumsfeld has also given money to Frank Gaffney's group. If Gaffney's organization were just an abstract "study group," that would be one thing. But it is a highly partisan advocacy organization that serves as the de facto nerve center of the NMD lobby.

Gaffney's center, which now has an annual budget of \$1.2 million, was started in 1988 with support from New Right funders like Richard Mellon Scaife and Joseph Coors. Since that time, Gaffney has turned it into a sort of working executive committee for the missile defense lobby. The center's advisory board includes representatives of larger conservative organizations, including Ed Feulner, president of the Heritage Foundation; William Bennett, co-director of Empower America; and Henry Cooper of High Frontier, the original Star Wars think tank, which was launched during the early years of the Reagan Administration. Other CSP advisory board members include Charles Kupperman and Bruce Jackson, who serve as vice president for Washington operations and director of planning and analysis, respectively, at Lockheed

Martin; key members of Congress like Republicans Curt Weldon, Christopher Cox and Jon Kyl; and a who's who of Reagan-era Star Warriors like Edward Teller and former Reagan science adviser George Keyworth.

Unlike most think tanks concerned with military issues, the Center for Security Policy receives a substantial portion of its funding from weapons manufacturers. Three out of the top four missile defense contractors—Boeing, Lockheed Martin and TRW—are all major corporate contributors to CSP, which has received more than \$2 million in corporate donations since its founding, accounting for roughly one-quarter of its total budget.

Rumsfeld's link to CSP is not his only affiliation with the Star Wars lobby. He's also on the board of Empower America, which ran deceptive ads against anti-NMD Senator Harry Reid of Nevada in the run-up to the November 1998 elections. In recognition of his service to the missile defense lobby, in October 1998—just three months after his "objective" assessment of the missile threat was released—CSP awarded Rumsfeld its "Keeper of the Flame" award for 1998 at a gala dinner attended by several hundred Star Wars boosters. In accepting the award, Rumsfeld joined the company of Reagan, Gingrich and several Congressional NMD boosters.

Getting Active

Peace Action (www.peaceaction.org), the largest grassroots peace group in the United States, has made stopping NMD and reducing nuclear weapons its top priority, sponsoring call-ins, a "missile-stop tour" and issue ads that are scheduled to run against key Republican senators who voted against the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. The website of the Coalition to Reduce Nuclear Dangers (www.crnld.org) offers the single best source of critical analysis and is chock-full of good links.

At a May 25 press conference the Global Research/Action Center on the Environment (GRACE) premiered a short film clip in which Paul Newman critiques the latest missile defense scheme after showing an excerpt from the 1966 Hitchcock thriller *Torn Curtain*, in which Newman plays a US scientist who defects to East Germany in the hopes of developing a new technology that will render nuclear missiles "obsolete" and that can be shared by the two superpower blocs. Sound familiar? Frances FitzGerald argues in her new book, *Way Out There in the Blue*, that this is where Reagan picked up the idea of using the phrase "impotent and obsolete" in his 1983 Star Wars speech.

On the right, a new group chaired by the Center for Security Policy's Frank Gaffney (www.protectamericans.now) is planning to run ads designed to scare the hell out of everyone about the dangers of foreign ballistic missiles, then get them to go to the group's website and punch in their ZIP code for a "customized" assessment of the missile threat to their neighborhood.

For an annotated list of websites of groups on both sides of the NMD debate, see *The Nation's* website (www.thenation.com).

—W.D.H. AND M.C.

NMD Resurgent: Fast Track to Oblivion?

In a reprise of the political two-step that preceded the 1996 presidential elections (Republicans lead, Clintonites follow), the Clinton Administration moved closer to the Republican position on missile defense with a January 1999 announcement that the President would seek a six-year, \$112 billion increase in Pentagon spending. The proposal included \$6.6 billion in new funding for procurement of missile defense equipment before 2005, the new target date for NMD deployment established by Defense Secretary William Cohen.

Clinton's decision to accelerate NMD funding was propelled in part by the furor caused by North Korea's August 1998 test of a two-stage ballistic missile, but the trump card in the Republican-led effort to jack up both overall military spending and NMD "deployment readiness" funding was the backlash from the Monica Lewinsky affair.

Long before the Lewinsky scandal, Clinton decided that throwing money at the Pentagon was the best way to shore up his credentials as Commander in Chief and divert attention from allegations that he had dodged the draft during the Vietnam War. By the fall of 1998, the combination of a growing federal budget surplus and the President's perceived political weakness resulting from the Lewinsky matter emboldened Congressional Republicans and Clinton's own Joint Chiefs of Staff to press him for billions of dollars in additional military funds.

In mid-September, the Joint Chiefs invited the President to a closed-door briefing where they read Clinton their wish lists on everything from boosting military pay and weapons procurement to applying fresh coats of paint to underutilized military bases. Within a week's time Clinton sent the Chiefs a letter pledging a Pentagon budget increase that would insure that "the men and women of our armed forces will have the resources they need to do their jobs." In October, Congressional Republicans did the Joint Chiefs one better, loading up Clinton's \$1 billion Pentagon supplemental appropriations bill aimed at addressing the military's newfound "readiness crisis" with what analyst John Isaacs of the Council for a Livable World has described as "a \$9 billion grab bag of pet projects" that included an additional \$1 billion for National Missile Defense.

Clinton's apparent embrace of NMD prompted Helle Bering of the conservative *Washington Times* to complain bitterly that "Clinton has appropriated yet another set of Republican issues." In mid-January Cohen took the Administration's NMD commitment one step further when he made the highly provocative statement that if the United States deemed it necessary to withdraw from the ABM treaty in order to field an effective defense against rogue-state missiles, it would do so regardless of Russia's reaction.

Meanwhile, back on Capitol Hill, NMD advocates were rallying around Senator Thad Cochran's National Missile Defense Act. In March 1999, aided by the votes of moderate and conservative Democrats who had been persuaded in part by the Rumsfeld Commission's official (albeit misleading) depiction of the North Korean missile threat, the House and Senate both passed bills calling for the deployment of a national missile defense system "as soon as it is technologically feasible."

Clinton signed the bill into law that July. Although his signing message made it clear that the Administration will consider

economic, technical and arms-control factors before deciding whether to deploy an NMD system, Star Wars boosters in Congress have been portraying the legislation as a firm national commitment come hell or high water.

The NMD Deception

From its inception in the Reagan White House to its resurrection in the Clinton era, the marketing of missile defense has been accompanied at every step by exaggerated technical claims, misleading cost estimates and outright lies. If experience is any guide, the missile defense test scheduled for late June or early July will almost certainly be rigged. (In 1984, in an instance of fraud that only came to light nine years later, a test of Lockheed's Homing Overlay Experiment was rigged by placing a beacon in the target missile so that it could literally signal its location to the interceptor missile.)

But even if the next test misfires, the Pentagon's Ballistic Missile Defense Organization (BMDO) has already put forward a rationale that Clinton could use to give the green light for deployment, namely that two more "hit to kill" tests could be squeezed in between now and next spring, when construction will begin on the critical NMD radar site in Shemya, Alaska, if Clinton decides to go full speed ahead on deployment. Even one successful "hit" in any of these next three tests—which will occur before BMDO contractors actually break ground on the Alaska radar project but after the Administration has committed funds to long-lead-time materials and services that will be needed to meet the starting date for construction—will be offered as proof of the dubious proposition that the system will work under real-world conditions.

Unfortunately, fraudulent testing of missile defense components is far from ancient history. Nira Schwartz, a computer software expert who worked on tests of the NMD interceptor for TRW, filed a civil suit against the company in April 1996 charging that it forced her to misreport her findings on the critical question of whether the interceptor missile can tell the difference between a real warhead and a decoy. The documents in the case were unsealed earlier this year and featured in a March 7 front-page *New York Times* story. The company has denied Schwartz's allegations, but another engineer who worked on the tests has backed her up.

Since Schwartz's claims became public earlier this year, MIT missile defense expert Theodore Postol has conducted an independent analysis of the data generated by the test in question, and he has concluded that the results raise fundamental questions about the ability of any currently available technology to discriminate between warheads and decoys. Since this capability is essential for even a modest NMD system to have any chance of intercepting a handful of incoming warheads, TRW and the Pentagon have gone to great lengths to cover up this embarrassing fact. When Postol sent a letter to the White House outlining his findings, the Pentagon responded by ruling that the contents of Postol's letter should be classified on the grounds that they contained top-secret material. On May 25 the BMDO released a cursory letter charging that Postol's findings were "incomplete" and his conclusions "wrong" because "Dr. Postol is not considering all the capabilities of our system of systems." Postol fired back the same day at a DC press conference organized by the

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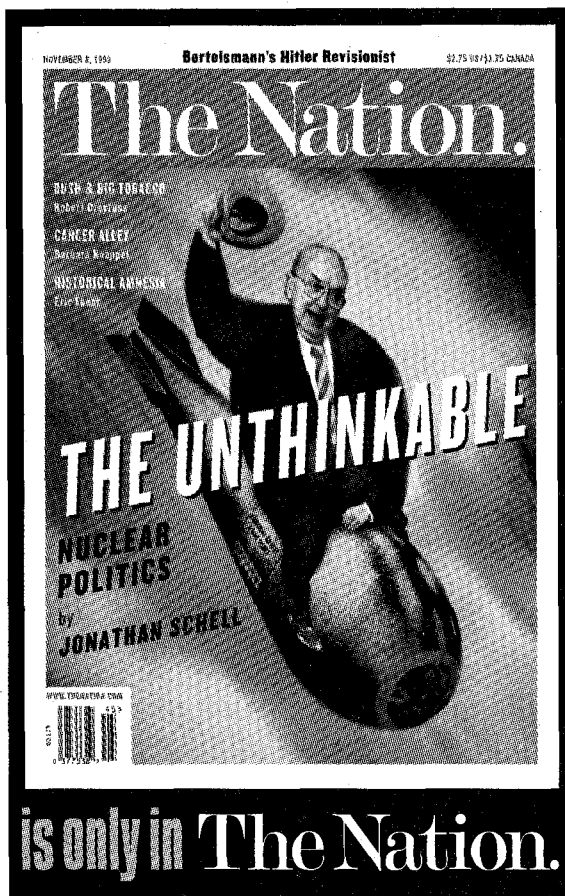
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Global Research/Action Center on the Environment, presenting his technical critique of the NMD system in detail and slamming the Administration for "foot-dragging and playing politics with an important decision that directly affects the security of the nation" rather than appointing an impartial panel to investigate seriously his charges of fraud in the test program.

In addition to the evidence of outright fraud, the NMD program has recently been subjected to a flurry of questions from critics within the Pentagon and the US intelligence community. On May 19, a few days after Postol sent his letter to the White House, the *Los Angeles Times* published an interview with a high-level US intelligence official who flatly contradicted the Clinton Administration's contention that China has nothing to fear from a limited US NMD system. The official also noted that the North Korean and Iranian missile threats have not been moving along as rapidly as expected, and he asserted that the concept of the "rogue state" was in itself an impediment to objective analysis of the missile threat.

There is one final element distorting the NMD testing program: corporate greed. The major players all have conflicts of interest.

Meanwhile, a blue-ribbon panel chaired by former Reagan Administration Secretary of the Air Force Gen. Larry Welch has issued two scathing critiques of NMD program management, the first of which pointed out that the NMD system was on a far tighter testing schedule than any recent weapons development program of comparable scale. It went on to charge that the program was on a headlong "rush to failure." The second Welch report, released this past November, strongly encouraged the Administration to push back its NMD deployment decision to avoid "regressing to a very high risk schedule." In February a report by Philip Coyle, the Pentagon's director of operational test and evaluation, charged that the Pentagon was facing heavy pressure to "meet an artificial decision point in the development process."

There is one final element distorting the NMD testing program: corporate greed. The major corporate players in the NMD testing program—Boeing, Lockheed Martin and Raytheon—all have serious and direct conflicts of interest, since the results of the tests they are helping to carry out will determine whether they start reaping multibillion-dollar missile defense contracts over the next few years. Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon has tried to wave off charges of fraud involving TRW's NMD "hit to kill" vehicle by arguing that TRW's version has not been chosen for inclusion in the final NMD system. However, Bacon fails to mention that Boeing, which is now in charge of overall systems integration for the entire NMD project, designed the interceptor vehicle that has been the subject of the fraud allegations. Whether Boeing colluded with TRW's manipulation of test results or merely overlooked them, it doesn't bode well for its role as the principal monitoring agent for subcontractors. The fox is guarding the chicken coop: If Boeing is able to orchestrate a series of seemingly credible tests, it stands to make billions of dollars in production contracts for decades to come. This inherent conflict of interest at the heart of the NMD testing program is one of the factors that have led missile defense experts at MIT and the Union of Concerned Scientists to call for the appointment of an independent panel to assess the feasibility of missile de-

fense before the President makes a deployment decision.

Boeing is not the only company with an interest in helping the Pentagon put the best face on the NMD program. Lockheed Martin, whose "legacy" company, Lockheed Aircraft, was in charge of the 1984 Homing Overlay Experiment, which was later exposed as fraudulent, brags in a recent edition of its company newsletter, *Lockheed Martin Today*, that it produces the rockets used to propel both the mock warhead and the "kill vehicle" involved in NMD "hit to kill" tests. This is certainly a convenient setup if the company and the BMDO are thinking of stacking the deck on the next intercept test to insure a successful result.

Of the four largest NMD contractors (the others are Boeing, Raytheon and TRW), Lockheed Martin has the most to gain. If US/Russian arms-reduction talks are stymied by US stubbornness on NMD, Lockheed Martin will be able to sustain its key nuclear weapons programs. And if NMD deployment moves forward, Lockheed Martin will receive billions in additional funding for production of numerous components and subcomponents of the national missile defense system.

Given what's at stake, the companies have decided to leave nothing to chance. Since Republicans took control of both houses of Congress in January 1995, weapons industry PACs have given twice as much to Republican Congressional candidates as they have to Democrats, a far higher margin than prevailed when the Democrats ruled Capitol Hill, when they received about 55 percent of defense industry PAC funds, compared with 45 percent for Republicans. Hard-line Star Warriors have gotten the bulk of this industry largesse. A World Policy Institute analysis of two recent pro-Star Wars letters to President Clinton—one from twenty-five senators organized by Jesse Helms stating that they would kill any arms-control deal with the Russians that attempted to put any limits on the scope of future NMD deployments, the other from thirty-one Republican senators pushing the Center for Security Policy's pet project, a sea-based missile defense system—reveals that the signatories of these pro-Star Wars missives have received a total of nearly \$2 million in PAC contributions from missile defense contractors in this election cycle.

Lockheed Martin has not neglected the presidential candidates. On the Republican side, Lockheed Martin vice president Bruce Jackson, who served as chairman of the US Committee to Expand NATO, was overheard by one of the authors at an industry gathering last year bragging about how the industry's troubles will be over if George W. Bush is elected, since Jackson would be personally writing the defense plank of the Republican platform. And Loral CEO Bernard Schwartz, who has longstanding ties to Lockheed Martin dating from when Lockheed absorbed Loral's defense unit in 1996, was the top individual donor of soft money to the Democratic Party in the 1996 presidential cycle; Loral employees gave \$601,000 to Democratic Party committees. Schwartz has nearly doubled that amount in the run-up to the November 2000 elections, with \$1.1 million in soft-money contributions to Democratic committees to date. He was briefly in the spotlight last year when he was accused of lobbying the Clinton Administration to ease the standards for the export of satellite technology to China.

Arabian Fables (I)

How the Arabs soften up world opinion with fanciful myths.

Josef Goebbels, the infamous propaganda minister of the Nazis, had it right. Just tell people big lies often enough and they will believe them. The Arabs have learned that lesson well. They have swayed world opinion by endlessly repeating myths and lies that have no basis in fact.

What are some of these myths?

The "Palestinians". That is the fundamental myth. The concept of "Palestinians" is one that did not exist until about 1948, when the Arab inhabitants, of what until then was Palestine, wished to differentiate themselves from the Jews. Until then, the Jews were the Palestinians. There was the Palestinian Brigade of Jewish volunteers in the British World War II Army (at a time when the Palestinian Arabs were in Berlin hatching plans with Adolf Hitler for world conquest and how to kill all the Jews); there was the Palestinian Symphony Orchestra (all Jews, of course); there was *The Palestine Post*; and so much more.

The Arabs who now call themselves "Palestinians" do so in order to persuade a misinformed world that they are a distinct nationality and that "Palestine" is their ancestral homeland. But they are no distinct nationality at all. They are the same — in language, custom, and tribal and family ties — as the Arabs of Syria, Jordan, and beyond. There is no more difference between the "Palestinians" and the other Arabs of those countries than there is between, say, the citizens of Minnesota and those of Wisconsin.

What's more, many of the "Palestinians", or their immediate ancestors, came to the area attracted by the prosperity created by the Jews, in what previously had been pretty much of a wasteland.

The nationhood of the "Palestinians" is a myth.

The "West Bank". Again, this is a concept that did not exist until 1948, when the army of the Kingdom of Transjordan, together with five other Arab armies, invaded the Jewish state of Israel, on the very day of its creation.

In what can almost be described as a Biblical miracle, the ragtag Jewish forces defeated the combined Arab might. But Transjordan stayed in possession of Judea and Samaria and the eastern part of

Jerusalem. The Jordanians expelled all the Jews from the area that they occupied, destroyed all Jewish houses of worship, and renamed as "West Bank" the territories that had been Judea and Samaria since time immemorial.

The attempt, quite successful, was to persuade an uninformed world that these territories were ancestral parts of the Jordanian Arab Kingdom (itself a very recent creation of British power diplomacy).

Even after the total rout of the Arabs in the 1967 Six-Day War, in which the Jordanians were driven out of

"The web of lies and myths that the Arab propaganda machine has created plays an important role in the unrelenting quest to destroy the State of Israel. What a shame that the world has accepted most of it!"

Judea/Samaria and of Jerusalem, they and the world continued to call this territory the "West Bank", a geographical and political concept that cannot be found on any except the most recent maps.

The concept of the "West Bank" is a myth.

The "Occupied Territories". After the victorious Six-Day War, during which the Israeli army defeated the same cabal of Arabs that had invaded the country in 1948, Israel regained possession of Judea/Samaria, which the Jordanians had illegally occupied for 19 years; of the Gaza Strip, which had been occupied by the Egyptians, but which had never been part of their country; and of the Golan Heights, a plateau the size of Queens, which, though originally part of Palestine, had been assigned to Syria by British-French agreement.

The last sovereign in Judea/Samaria and in Gaza was the British mandatory power — and before it was the Ottoman Empire. All of Palestine, including what is now the Kingdom of Jordan, was, by the Balfour Declaration, destined to be the Jewish National Home. How then could the Israelis possibly be "occupiers" in their own territory? Who would be the sovereign and who the rightful inhabitants?

The concept of "occupied territories" in reference to Judea/Samaria and Gaza is an Arab propaganda myth.

Unable so far to destroy Israel on the battlefield — though they are feverishly preparing for their next assault — the Arabs are now trying to overcome and destroy Israel by their acknowledged "policy of stages". That policy is to get as much land as possible carved out of Israel "by peaceful and diplomatic" means, so as to make Israel indefensible and softened up for the final assault. The web of lies and myths that the Arab propaganda machine has created plays an important role in the unrelenting quest to destroy the State of Israel. What a shame that the world has accepted most of it!

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NMD and Beyond

The continued pursuit of NMD will have far-reaching consequences for the future of arms control and the goal of nuclear abolition. It will mean a false sense of security for Americans and an increased threat of nuclear war for the world.

Instead of going down that road, the US government should focus its energy and resources on preventive measures. When Clinton meets with Putin on June 4, he could pledge to get US/Russian nuclear reductions back on track through steps that include seeking increased funding for the Cooperative Threat Reduction program—which has helped finance the destruction of thousands of Russian nuclear warheads and weapons facilities—and working toward continued reductions in US and Russian nuclear forces under START agreements. Clinton could also pledge to work for ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which was defeated last fall by the Senate despite overwhelming

public support. Above all, Clinton could assure Russia that the United States has no intention of withdrawing from the ABM treaty. That would put Al Gore in a much stronger position to criticize George W. Bush's misleading proposal to pursue unilateral cuts in US nuclear forces in combination with an ambitious NMD plan that would usher in an era of instability by demolishing what's left of the global nuclear arms-control regime.

The newly resurgent peace and arms-control movement, led by organizations like Peace Action, the Union of Concerned Scientists, the Global Network Against Nuclear Weapons and Power in Space, and the Fourth Freedom Forum, is trying to generate a large-enough outcry for "arms reductions, not missile defense" over this summer to beat back missile defense hysteria. But stopping NMD is just one step toward a sane nuclear policy; ultimately only the abolition of all nuclear weapons can provide the safety and security that Reagan and his latter-day disciples have pledged to provide through the false promise of missile defense. ■

HE HAS SPOKEN AS THE WORLD'S CONSCIENCE. BUT IT'S HARD TO MEASURE THE RESULTS.

Kofi Annan: A 'Moral Voice'

IAN WILLIAMS

Just after his election as UN Secretary General in 1996, Kofi Annan echoed his Swedish predecessor, Dag Hammarskjöld, saying that in addition to his bureaucratic tasks, a Secretary General also had "a political and diplomatic role, and above all a moral voice, which should be heard periodically when necessary." Well, Annan's voice certainly has been, most recently on the industrialized world's lack of commitment to Africa. As Brian Urquhart, who was a UN official from its very inception, comments, Annan "has taken seriously the idea of being a conscience for the international community. He's used the office to push some very important ideas that are not immediately popular—and nobody else could have got away with his speech to the General Assembly on humanitarian intervention."

That and related speeches, in the wake of NATO's Kosovo war and the disasters in Africa, questioned what has always been assumed to be a cornerstone of the UN: the notion of state sovereignty. Annan told the delegates in 1999, "When we read the [UN] Charter today, we are more than ever conscious that its aim is to protect individual human beings, not to protect those who abuse them." What is more, he suggested, the world has a right and a duty to intervene against those who do.

For example, at the time of Kosovo, headlines declared that Annan opposed NATO intervention. In fact, "his regret was not that the intervention took place but that the Security Council didn't undertake its responsibilities to oversee it," one of his senior aides explained. Annan compared Kosovo to Rwanda, asking his listen-



LISA BLACKSHEAR

ers to "imagine that there had been a coalition of states ready and willing to act in defense of the Tutsi population, but the Council had refused or delayed giving the green light. Should such a coalition then have stood idly by, while the horror unfolded?" In fact, in real life, there was no coalition, and the United States at the UN actively thwarted any attempt to do more.

Even so, he told *The Nation* that there is an "emerging world opinion that we should concentrate more on issues of individual rights against the states that threaten them. We focused so much on interstate war in the past. We had no problem in the Council of uniting to get Iraq out of Kuwait. If the source of the threat is internal, with thousands or even millions at risk, do we stand by and let it happen? I believe that in the past we have concentrated too much on state sovereignty, and now there is a need for a new consensus." He added, "Clearly, we need to have a higher authority, the Security Council, to authorize force in the common interest. I deliberately provoked a debate by asking what that common interest is. How do you define it? Who determines when action is to be taken?"

Some delegates rose up to denounce the heresy when he pronounced it. However, Annan succeeded in putting the proposal firmly on the global agenda, and what's more, he survived unscathed. Indeed, shortly afterward he was warmly welcomed in China, one of the major proponents of national sovereignty. Stressing a moral role for the UN is surprisingly innovative. Despite the UN's high moral standing with the public, Annan's predecessors tended to view morality as whatever member governments wanted.

As Annan approaches the end of his first term, it is difficult to

Ian Williams is The Nation's UN correspondent.

assess his achievements. The organization itself is on a marginally better financial footing, and it is a more pleasant place to work—but has it made the world a better place to live in for the overwhelming majority not on its payroll? Can an organization kept on a very short financial leash by Washington afford a moral position in the face of traditional diplomatic amorality?

Annan's predecessor, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, used to describe himself as the humble servant of the member states. (Of course, he wasn't, nor did he behave like one.) In contrast, Annan seems to have adapted the role so that he appears more like P.G. Wodehouse's butler, Jeeves: the unflappable provider of good advice, quietly put, expressed in a way that observes protocol but makes it clear to all just who is right. As one senior UN official declared, "People find him someone they like to work with and like to oblige, and they respect him as someone who is quite courageous and independent. No head of state or government will criticize him publicly."

The relentless US pressure for "reforms," usually a euphemism for economies, and the huge US arrears are not conducive to high staff morale. Even so, most of the staff trust and like Annan. Indeed, a common complaint from more reform-minded advisers is that he is loyal to a fault. "Virtually no one has been fired or even moved from a post since he took over," said one, "and it's very difficult to clear deadwood without some pruning." That is of course in stark contrast to his predecessor, who had even the most senior officials wondering how long their contracts would last.

While Annan retains his personal affability, many of his former colleagues and friends complain that his entourage has contrived to form a solid phalanx around him. It is difficult to tell to what extent this is simply a function of the office. The Secretary General cannot appoint his own Cabinet; his nominal assistants in political affairs, peacekeeping, finance and so on are effectively appointed by the permanent five members of the Security Council. As a result, the members of his informal kitchen Cabinet on the thirty-eighth floor of the UN's New York headquarters attain an importance beyond their nominal ranks—and occasionally, some suggest, beyond their merits.

Some insiders also fear that his staff has him so overbooked with protocol appointments that he cannot take time to develop a strategic view. Instead, they suspect, he leaves that to aides like Edward Mortimer, the former *Financial Times* foreign editor; Shashi Tharoor, the Indian author and peacekeeping department veteran; and John Ruggie, former dean of the Columbia School of International Studies—and incidentally someone to whom Dick Morris used to go for assistance in triangulating Clinton's foreign policy. Of course, it is no bad thing to take advice, and Annan does not follow it blindly—an impossibility even if he were so inclined, since his advisers do not always see eye to eye. Indeed, their leaks to the press, occasionally at cross purposes, send confusing messages.

In one respect, Annan is much more independent than his predecessors. Many governments, especially those of the permanent five members, feel they have a kind of feudal right over particular positions and expect to nominate their nationals to them. Annan has insisted on multiple nominations, from which he chooses. That was apparent last year, when he snubbed the European Union's sole candidate for the head of the UN Development

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Program and appointed his own choice, Mark Malloch Brown, when they refused to submit other names.

While expanding the UN's agenda and trying to carve out an independent role for it, Annan has carefully restrained his ambitions for the organization within pragmatic limits. In fact, those limits represent what is possibly his biggest failure, even if it is not really his fault. The organization still does not have the resources it needs for rapid responses, let alone serious contingency planning, for the crises that are now perennial. That weakness is now all too evident in Sierra Leone, where the very Security Council delegations that voted for a force then caviled at providing the necessary military and financial backing.

Despite its own conclusions from previous operations and despite Annan's own obvious unease, in Sierra Leone the UN has allowed itself to be caught up in a replay of Bosnia and may yet do the same in Congo. In each case, the UN has effectively provided political cover for the

major powers by embarking on "peacekeeping" operations where there is no peace to keep and no willingness on the part of those able to enforce a peace to take any risks to do so. Annan's exasperation with the debacle in Sierra Leone broke through his own usual reserve and impelled him to criticize member states in an almost unprecedented way, ranging from suggesting that UN peacekeepers may have sold their weapons to deploring the US demand for huge payments to airlift reinforcements from Bangladesh.

One could say cynically that the UN has always functioned better as a symbol of global citizenship that catalyzes events around it rather than as a positive agent in itself. In practice, the UN has never had a stellar practical record at sorting out world conflicts. In his launch of the millennium assembly to be held later this year, Annan tacitly admits his distinctive conjunction of moral eminence and modest organizational expectations by invoking a catalytic role, saying that the "UN's influence derives not from power but from the values it represents, its role in helping to set and sustain global norms, its ability to stimulate global concern and action, and the trust inspired by its practical work to improve people's lives." Whatever the humiliations of Sierra Leone, Annan has excelled in exemplifying this moral and symbolic function.

His major asset is his indisputable charm, which allows him to cause controversy without himself being controversial. Annan's successful use of that asset can be judged from the way he has survived allegations about his earlier role in the Srebrenica and Rwanda missions. He was Assistant and then Under Secretary General for Peacekeeping when the UN operations in Rwanda and Bosnia led the organization to be called an accomplice to genocide. Yet he has emerged relatively unharmed. The first and cynical reason is, of course, that the member states who could have prevented the mass killings are even more deeply implicated. Annan was an international civil servant carrying out their wishes. Whoever buried the fax that Canadian Gen. Roméo Dallaire sent to UN headquarters warning of the impending genocide in Rwanda did so because the United States had declared a preemptive veto against sending any reinforcements.

At the time of the Bosnian debacle, in particular, many human rights activists argued that senior UN officials should have gone public and exposed the duplicity of the permanent Security Council members. However, such open dissent would have cut across the culture of public loyalty and unity that UN staff have traditionally adopted. Neither Kofi Annan nor anyone else went on the record at the time. Even so, the events clearly haunt him, and not just because they keep being raised. He has referred to them frequently, and he cooperated in the preparation and publication of reports on the Srebrenica massacre and Rwanda genocide that mercilessly expose the failings of the UN and its staff. It is true that in traditional UN form, the responsible people were obscured in the Srebrenica report under the general rubric of "the Secretariat," but nothing like it had ever been seen before. And it is worth recording that the State Department would not give evidence to the inquiries.

Annan said the major lesson of Rwanda and Srebrenica is that "we need not only clear mandates, but resources. In Rwanda, if we had

moved earlier and faster, if we had had a reinforced brigade of 5,000 troops there, it would have saved so many lives." He continued, "As in Srebrenica, maybe as the Secretariat and as the head of peacekeeping, we should have stood up more firmly to the member states and told them that what they wanted us to do was impossible. That you are not giving us the resources to establish safe areas, you are creating a false sense of security." In fairness, those messages were delivered, but perhaps too quietly.

Decisive action is often by its very nature divisive, which is why indecision is an institutional characteristic of the United Nations. Annan has been prepared to break the mold. One direct lesson he drew was that the UN's old operating principle of neutrality between contending parties, not to mention the idea of moral equivalency between murderers and their victims, was no longer tenable. If not zero tolerance, there was to be considerably less forbearance for outright thugs.

Almost unnoticed, Annan's experience in situations like Bosnia has led him to quietly drop a longstanding UN predisposition to consider negotiations, unsupported by a willingness to act, as sufficient. That was shown when he tried to break the impasse over inspections in Iraq in 1998. While being attacked by some people in Washington for his temerity in talking to Saddam Hussein, he was quite candid about the reason for his (as it turned out, temporary) negotiating success. "You can do a lot with diplomacy, but of course you can do a lot more with diplomacy backed with firmness and force," he said, referring to the imminent threat of bombing.

Spurred by his own experience, Annan has also created space for staff members to talk directly to the media and to ventilate their concerns, considering the advantages of transparency to outweigh the risks of occasional mixed messages. In addition, he has appointed people to head operations who can be guaranteed not to stay quiet in the face of atrocity. Compare Bernard Kouchner, formerly of Doctors Without Borders, in Kosovo, or Ian Martin, formerly of Amnesty International, in East Timor, with their complaisant and compliant predecessors in Bosnia. Perhaps

Annan has dropped a longstanding UN predisposition to consider negotiations, unsupported by a willingness to act, as sufficient.

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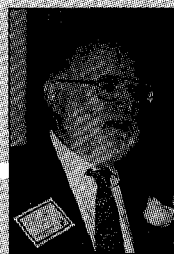
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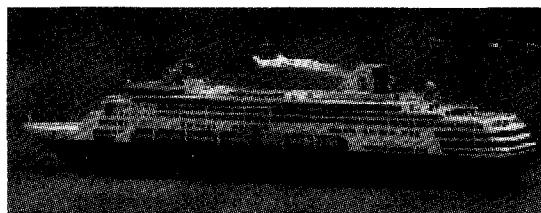
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one of his boldest appointments was that of Mary Robinson, then President of Ireland, as High Commissioner for Human Rights. Her outspoken comments on Russian behavior in Chechnya, for example, break the bounds of UN discourse while almost certainly largely reflecting Annan's own concerns. The two have performed as a double act, with Robinson saying loudly and publicly what Annan thinks but has to hedge with diplomatic reserve.

That is not necessarily bureaucratic timidity. As he told the Council on Foreign Relations last year, "Without a doubt, it is sometimes tempting to give in to one's feelings of personal outrage at a specific transgression, especially when doing so would win political popularity in some quarters. But it would betray the larger obligation to prevent aggression and preserve the peace."

In the same diplomatic mode, Annan has so far been firm but not abrasive about the US default on its dues arrears, currently running at nearly \$1.8 billion. "A superpower cannot be alone, and it quite often needs the other countries, regional players and major powers, to do what it wants. The United States has done a lot in this organization. It has a lot to offer and a lot to gain, if it can work with other countries to make this a dynamic and indispensable organization," he said.

Ironically, Madeleine Albright, now US Secretary of State and formerly UN ambassador, led the assault against his predecessor by declaring that there was no way Congress would pay its UN dues while Boutros-Ghali was the incumbent. Three years later, the money has yet to arrive. Annan confesses that he is "very disappointed," but he has also been clearly engaged in trying to win over a wider American constituency for the UN. Boutros-Ghali, who aimed to engage and placate the United States, was seen as anti-American after Albright attacked him. Annan, as the American nominee, has been the object of only occasional grumbles from Washington. However, most members know that a Secretary General has to avoid gratuitously annoying the host country and wherever possible to court it, no matter how difficult the task.

One part of Annan's constituency-building is a very conscious

effort to reach out to the American Jewish organizations and to Israel. On one level this doubtless reflects his personal feelings; he is a member, by marriage, of the family of Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat who saved thousands of Hungarian Jews from the Nazis during World War II. There is also no doubt that the American Jewish reaction to UN backing for Palestinian rights has been a significant factor in eroding support for the organization within the United States, so whatever the motivation, any moves to neutralize that hostility could be intended to make it easier to get sense, and maybe even dollars, out of Washington.

More than three years into his five-year term, Annan has been discreetly taciturn about his prospects and ambitions for a second one, although few people doubt he would accept it if offered. One looming question is how many nominations there will be for the position. Many Asian governments feel that the next SG should be Asian. The only Asian state with a veto is China, which has shown discreet signs of distress at some of Annan's kite-flying on humanitarian intervention. But China is more sophisticated diplomatically than the Albright-Helms team, and short of Annan offering UN membership to Taiwan or Tibet, it is unlikely to oppose his reappointment. Albright, Boutros-Ghali's nemesis, has shown signs of impatience with Annan, but to be attacked by her is probably no bad thing, since it boosts his popularity with everyone else. And whoever is in the White House next year, Albright is unlikely to remain at the State Department.

The chances are that Annan will indeed get a second term by default, possibly whether he wants it or not. But his longer-term agenda can succeed only if the United States becomes a responsible global citizen. On issue after issue, US recalcitrance and willingness to use its veto has provoked other states, notably Russia, into a destructive me-tooism on the Security Council. It remains to be seen whether Annan can do anything about that when so many others have failed or even, like the Clinton Administration, given up without trying. ■

LETTERS

C O N T I N U E D

(Continued From Page 2)

about the tools these families need to have a chance to escape poverty. If more media organizations joined in giving a voice to the poor, it could help generate a national dialogue about how to include more Americans in our nation's boom.

JULIAN PALMER

National Center for Children in Poverty

New York City

■ Eric Alterman strikes a nerve here at the Community Service Society of New York, which for 154 years has been providing not only emergency help but solutions to the problems that face those in poverty. Our organization and others deal directly with the poor and provide them an "articulate voice." If the media take the time to contact the right organization, they will be put in touch with people who, although poor, can speak for themselves. We share Alterman's frustration with the networks' failure to cover

poverty issues and, in fact, helped arrange a program for the media at the Newseum/NY on "Covering Poverty." The TV panelists admitted that poverty gets ignored because it doesn't get ratings. With 34.5 million poor people in the United States, poverty has as much an effect on the economy as e-commerce. It warrants better media coverage that would lead to improved public awareness. I suggest sensitizing editors to the subject through more seminars like the Newseum's; treating poverty holistically, not as scattered stories on housing, health and education; and assigning specific "beat" reporters so that they can gain expertise and develop sources, like CSS.

DAVID R. JONES

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY KILLER

Madison, Wis.

■ I appreciated Robert Blau's tongue-in-cheek apology for Texas' equal-opportunity execution

machine ["Letters," May 8]. However, I would like to correct two points:

In regard to the execution of juveniles, Blau claims that "we haven't found the right punk yet." In the past two years, Joseph Cannon, Robert Anthony Carter and Glenn McGinnis have all been executed in Texas for crimes committed when they were under 18. Indeed, Texas is, along with such other bastions of human rights as Pakistan, Iran, Virginia and Oklahoma, one of the last remaining places in the world to execute juvenile offenders.

Blau closes with an invitation to "anyone [who] can think of a category we haven't snuffed." May I suggest white murderers of black victims? The last such person executed in Texas was James Wilson, in 1854, and the murder victim was a slave. The only reason that crime merited the death penalty was that the murderer had intended to kill the slave's white owner.

MOSES KLEIN

BOOKS & THE ARTS

Janey Got Her Gun

MICHAEL KIMMEL

Meeet Erin Claunch. A high school honor student and cross-country runner from Round Hill, Virginia, Claunch enrolled at Virginia Military Institute (VMI) in 1997 "to test my limits and see how far I can go." A physics major, Claunch is preparing for a commission with the Air Force upon graduation, and she aspires to become an astronaut. She ranks fifteenth in her class of 298 and easily surpassed the uniform gender-neutral physical fitness standards: Sixty sit-ups in two minutes, five pull-ups and a one-mile run in less than twelve minutes. (She did eighty-four sit-ups, fifteen pull-ups and ran the course in less than eleven minutes.)

Quite a leap from Shannon Faulkner, who took on VMI's brother institution, the Citadel, in 1993 and waged a protracted three-year court battle to be admitted to its Corps of Cadets, only to leave the school in tears after a week.

The Supreme Court's 7-to-1 decision against VMI four years ago opened to women the last two all-male state-supported colleges in America. The schools' cynical last-ditch efforts to preserve their single-sex status—pale-replica "leadership training" programs at nearby women's colleges—were not to be understood, the schools tried to convince the courts, as separate but equal, yet rather as "distinct but superior." (Imagine if West Point had tried to avoid coeducation by proposing that a few Vassar students march around in uniform once a week.)

In the four years since those barracks doors were thrown open, women haven't exactly poured into the formerly all-male bastions of Southern chivalry and military manhood. Rather, it's been a slow trickle. Today the US military is about 15 percent

female. VMI claims to be 16 percent and the Citadel is a scant 4 percent. The enrollment and retention problem has been cause for serious consternation for VMI's superintendent, Josiah Bunting III, who fought fiercely against women's entry but is now determined to make their "assimilation" a resounding success. On the other hand, nothing could make the Citadel administrators happier than insuring that the school remain utterly inhospitable to women, turning a blind, if winking, eye away from their continued hazing. The

IN THIS REVIEW

BREAKING OUT: VMI and the Coming of Women.

By Laura Fairchild Brodie.
Pantheon. 350 pp. \$26.

THE KINDER, GENTLER MILITARY: Can America's Gender-Neutral Fighting Force Still Win Wars?

By Stephanie Gutmann.
Scribner's. 300 pp. \$25.

IN GLORY'S SHADOW: Shannon Faulkner, the Citadel and a Changing America.

By Catherine Manegold.
Knopf. 330 pp. \$26.95.

difference between these two very similar schools makes for a fascinating story.

VMI and the Citadel are not your typical educational institutions. For one thing, they are both purposefully anachronistic Southern schools, looking back reverently to the Lost Cause, and they resent any federal official dictating on a state's right to determine its own educational policies. Both trace their histories to before the Civil War—the Citadel was established in 1842, on the heels of Denmark Vesey's ill-fated slave uprising, to insure Charleston's wealthy slavetraders against any further "disturbances." VMI, founded three years earlier in the town of Lexington, sent its

Michael Kimmel served as the Justice Department's expert witness on gender issues in the VMI and Citadel litigation. A professor of sociology at SUNY, Stony Brook, his books include Manhood in America (Free Press) and, most recently, The Gendered Society (Oxford).

cadets directly into battle in a minor skirmish in 1864. Stonewall Jackson, a relatively unpopular and taciturn instructor of natural philosophy for a few months at VMI, is today worshiped as its greatest hero; the central barracks are named for him, his statue stands proudly at its entrance (cadets salute him as they enter) and his relics, including his moth-eaten stuffed horse, Little Sorrell, occupy hallowed space in VMI's museum.

Both schools provide a disciplined military atmosphere, although fewer than one-third of graduating cadets pursue a military career. VMI and the Citadel are what the great sociologist Erving Goffman called "total institutions," in which academic study, residential life (the barracks) and military training are all integrated into a closed system in which cadets are immersed from the moment they set foot on campus. Both employ what they call an "adversative method," which deliberately induces emotional and psychological stress. For first-year students, known as "rats" at VMI and "knobs" at the Citadel, the process entails a mixture, Laura Fairchild Brodie writes, "of bonding and bondage." Each cadet is systematically stripped of individual identity, then slowly and deliberately rebuilt in the corporate mold. Heads are shaved (thus the nickname "knobs"); seemingly random and nonsensical orders are given, to be carried out unquestioningly; subordination to a training cadre of second-year students is relentless, merciless and brutal. One VMI alum claimed that the system prepared him to be a POW, not a soldier. "You don't really graduate from VMI," one daughter and sister of VMI grads said. "You survive it." Think of Marine Corps boot camp run by unsupervised teenage boys. Think of that tree house with the sign that says NO GURLS ALLOWED. If combat unleashes the dogs of war, VMI and Citadel cadets are its puppies.

Clearly, these are not schools for everyone—though virtually everyone who wants to attend can. Acceptance rates at both schools hover around 80 percent, ranking them among the nation's least academically competitive schools—albeit with the most fiercely loyal alumni (VMI boasts the highest per capita endowment of any publicly supported college or university). The brutality of the adversative method implants a deeply felt bonding among the men; solidarity among cadets is intense, and graduates join what they lovingly call the world's largest fraternity.

Two new books take us inside these

bastions of Southern masculinity. Catherine Manegold's *In Glory's Shadow* offers an impressionist history of the school and its historical and cultural context as a citadel of Southern honor and male privilege. As an outsider with extensive access to historical documents and interviews with key players, Manegold, who covered the Citadel story for the *New York Times*, sees the school's resistance to Shannon Faulkner's admission into the Corps of Cadets as a morality play in miniature, a

'Save the Males' appeared on bumper stickers statewide in Shannon Faulkner's wake, as if one woman threatened an entire gender.

defining moment in the transformation of America. She provides an intricately detailed portrait of sadistic machismo, twisted by decades of insularity and insolent adolescence—a portrait that ends with the cadets' shamefully triumphant celebration at Faulkner's withdrawal, followed by a brief coda in which the school snarls and snaps at the prospect that others will take her place.

In *Breaking Out*, Laura Fairchild Brodie, an adjunct professor at VMI and wife of the school's band leader, writes from the inside, chronicling, with excruciating attention to detail, the deliberations and preparations for women's entry that followed the Supreme Court decision. VMI fought, valiant and bitter to the end, but when the end came, so too did its resistance. The difference between insider and outsider among the authors, though, is of less significance than the chronology each author unfolds—and the differences between two schools that on the surface appear so similar.

That surface gleams in the Southern sun like so many perfectly polished brass belt buckles, according to Manegold. The Citadel's public face is all honor, glory and integrity, an antebellum world where men and women are addressed as "Sir" and "Ma'am." "The success of the Citadel is no mystery" observed Bud Watts, the superintendent of the school during the litigation. "It results from the benefits of a well-rounded education which develops cadets academically, morally, spiritually, and physically; all within a framework of a demanding, strict, disciplined military environment. This experience builds character and self-confidence, instills integrity and honor."

The shadow Citadel is something else entirely. Readers may recall Citadel alum Pat Conroy's description in *The Lords of Discipline*, his fictional re-creation of cadet life:

We did not receive a college education at the Institute, we received an indoctrination, and all our courses were designed to make us malleable, unimaginative, uninquisitive citizens of the republic, impregnable to ideas—or thought—unsanctioned by authority.... It demanded limitless conformity from its sons, and we concurred blindly. We spent our four years as passionate true believers, catechists of our harsh and spiritually arctic milieu, studying, drilling, arguing in the barracks, cleaning our rooms, shining our shoes, writing on the latrine walls, writing papers, breaking down our rifles, and missing the point. The Institute was making us stupid; irretrievably, tragically, and infinitely stupid.

(Conroy was one of Faulkner's staunchest supporters, sponsoring rallies in her support and eventually paying her tuition at a private college after she fled Charleston.)

In glory's shadow lie unspeakable cruelties, meted out by cadets, unpunished by the administration. "They say all this stuff about honor and discipline," commented one cadet. "But it's not honor. It's boys taking boys and tearing them apart."

This sanctimonious sadism evolved over the years. At first, the Citadel looked back in anger at the South's defeat and ignominious humbling during Reconstruction. And for the next century and a half, smoldering Southern resentment fused with untrammelled adolescent masculinity. What was once a three-month hazing ordeal for freshmen gradually spanned the entire first year. None were spared the relentless torture; "in the end, they all broke." By the early seventies, the culture of cruelty was out of control. Injuries to cadets were "not only common, but expected, especially broken wrists caused by attempts on the part of the freshmen to deflect the swats of upper classmen," wrote one cadet in the school paper. And reformers invariably met defeat. Adm. James Stockdale, brought in to clean the school up in 1979, left in disgust after a year of frustrated reforms, saying the place reminded him of the North Vietnamese POW camp he had endured for eight years. At the Citadel, the inmates ran the asylum, and they nearly ran it into the ground.

By the time Faulkner applied, enrollments had dropped almost as far as morale. Here was a chance for the school to reinvent itself, to enter the twentieth century in its last decade. Instead, the Citadel and its supporters—students, administrators, alumni, Charleston loyalists—used every conceivable

able subterfuge to insure that Faulkner would not succeed. "Save the Males" appeared on bumper stickers and banners all over the state—as if one woman threatened an entire gender. (Well, Napoleon did apparently comment that "he who is full of courage and sang-froid before an enemy battery sometimes trembles before a skirt.")

Faulkner's case riveted the nation's attention on this largely forgotten educational throwback to that antebellum fusion of Southern chivalry and viciousness. And, recounting those terrible weeks, Manegold's book reveals for the first time why Faulkner really left. That Faulkner was reviled, scorned and harassed routinely, mocked with obscene T-shirts worn proudly all over the state, is well-known. And the way she was shunned and isolated is testament, albeit a twisted one, that the Citadel system works. "A lone wolf will find it impossible to survive within the Corps," is the way the student handbook puts it. "Your classmates are your only companions.... These classmates are your sole source of support and aid at this time. They will be your friends for life."

Not Shannon Faulkner's friends for life. Frozen out, she had nowhere to turn for the support the school claims is essential for

survival. The school wanted her to fail.

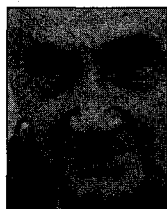
Much worse, though, is what actually happened. A few days before she left home for the Citadel, Faulkner was in a grocery store in her hometown when she was grabbed from behind by a man whose face she never saw. "I can't touch you while you're on campus," he said to her. "But I can get to your parents. I know a place where I can watch them burn." On her first day on campus, she heard that voice again, coming from a group of men near the entrance to the barracks. It was at that point that she lost her lunch and spent the rest of the week in the infirmary, unable to hold anything down. It wasn't that she was overweight, out of shape or a girl; Shannon Faulkner suffered from battle stress.

Many observers thought Faulkner a failure who had demanded entry only to discover that she couldn't make the grade. But her persistence over those three years of constant torment and threat, her steadfast resolve and impish sense of humor, suggested more courage than any of the male cadets at the Citadel would ever be called on to show. It was Faulkner—not the Citadel cadets—who had the right stuff, the stuff that makes for the honorable "citizen soldier." She opened the door for other women, who have followed her into the

Citadel, seeking its particular brand of physical and mental torture as a way to test their limits and to cement bonds of friendship and love born of mutual—and equal—victimization.

Manegold tells this story deftly, with an effective mix of perverse curiosity and growing disdain and horror. Her journalistic reportage is crisp and clear, but it's mixed with moments when Manegold exults in her freedom from journalistic constraints. Occasionally, she lays on the metaphors thick as molasses, her prose becoming overlaid with competing scents, like "mildew and magnolias," and coincidences are accorded a portentous historical significance. And in the book's finale, she relies on a series of anonymous, uncorroborated e-mail messages from a current cadet she identifies only as "V."

Compared with this, *Breaking Out* reads more like a required textbook, as Brodie recounts every deliberation, discussion and debate that preoccupied VMI after 1996, when it was forced to admit women. "If we're going to do it, we're going to do it well—extraordinarily well," Bunting promised. "We will have to effect a cultural change, an attitudinal change, many of us in ourselves; doubt,



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skepticism, cynicism, sorrow are not a fertile soil in which to plant the seeds of a new coeducational VMI."

Some of the difference between the two schools can be traced to their leadership. The Citadel grumbled toward coeducation with indifferent and ineffective leaders, while VMI engaged one of its most illustrious alums. A Rhodes scholar and highly decorated Vietnam soldier, Bunting sees himself as a military figure cast in a classical, somewhat flamboyant mold, who leads his troops into battle by day and reads Ovid in the original by candlelight in his tent. He'd also been president of a women's college (Briarcliffe), a men's college (Hampden-Sydney) and presided as headmaster of the transition from all-boys to coed at a private school in Lawrenceville. Having testified for both VMI and the Citadel at trial—it was Bunting who claimed famously that women would be "a toxic kind of virus" that would destroy the mystical bonding among the men—he now seemed to do a complete about-face. If women were coming, he said, we want them to be as fully assimilated into the corps as possible.

"Assimilated," however, does not mean integrated. The corps was not going to change one jot for these women. If they wanted VMI, they were going to get it. No holds barred. In the VMI view of the world, equality means sameness.

To make this coeducational VMI succeed, Bunting had to bring everyone along, some willingly, others kicking and screaming. That included the school's fiercely loyal alumni, who seriously tried to raise more than \$200 million to take the school private rather than admit women; faculty, who largely welcomed the change; cadets, who feared the watering down of their training and thus their reputation as men (the last all-male class called itself LCWB, or Last Class With Balls); and groundskeepers, laundry workers and food staff, all of whom would have to accept the new regime.

Committees debated endlessly. Topics ranged from the most central to the most trivial. Physical training requirements remained unchanged, and women struggled to make their quota of five pull-ups (West Point, using gender-norming, only requires women to do a flex arm hang). The honor code remained untouched; academics actually improved with the addition of new majors in psychology and criminal justice; and, most important, the brutal daily routines of the "ratline" were not altered at all.

Bunting prepared the corps to see

women as the beneficiaries, not the cause, of the new regime. The brass instituted strict policies on sexual harassment, fraternization and hazing, and also brought in women cadets from Norwich and Texas A&M to serve as mentors to the female rats. (In my research, the first women cadets at West Point identified the absence of role models and mentors as one of the more serious problems they faced.)

At the other end of the spectrum were the seemingly trivial details. Should the

New rules could be just what's needed down at the ol' PX. Punishment as initiation may have been functional for Braveheart, but...

women's uniforms have breast pockets like the men's? (Too much attention drawn to anatomy or too different from men's uniforms?) What kinds of swimsuits should the women wear during compulsory swimming classes? (The school proposed baggy black sacks with padded cups for the bras, because they didn't want anyone embarrassed when they got cold leaving the pool. They settled on a modest compromise somewhere between *Baywatch* and Coney Island circa 1910.)

What about their hair? Should the women cadets also get their heads shaved? To shave the women struck some as "malicious compliance"—a vindictive, punitive equality of the sexes that makes the men look bald and the women look like freaks. Cutting the men's hair takes away their individuality, but not their manhood; for women it takes away their femininity and exaggerates their individuality. On the other hand, if equality means sameness, then what's good for the gander is what the goose is going to get, like it or not. (At the Citadel, three of the first four female cadets followed Demi Moore's lead in *G.I. Jane* and shaved their own heads.)

But if heaven is in the details, so, too, is hell. Some officials, Brodie writes, "seemed to want to create an environment in which they could spare the cadets the embarrassing moments that come with having a body." The all-male committees seemed utterly preoccupied—and woefully misinformed—about menstruation, for example. Should female rats be given medical leave during their periods? Would the women need private showers? (At the Merchant Marine Academy, the school installed private showers when women came, and the women promptly tore down the stall separators.) What about tampon machines in the bathrooms? (After all, the men didn't have them.) Should they be free or coin-operated? Images of once-modest women

with blood trickling down their legs in gang showers was simply too much to bear.

Much of Brodie's book provides an exhaustive and exhausting catalogue of the elaborate discussions over every unbearably mundane item of clothing, training regimen and dorm life. I'm not sure casual readers will be as engrossed as I was with the minutes of meetings to discuss shower stalls, but I was fascinated and occasionally appalled at the thorough—and occasionally thoroughly silly—attention to detail. By the end of the book I had developed a grudging but genuine respect for the school and for Bunting's resolve to preserve its traditions and have women succeed there. And, Brodie argues, it paid off.

After just a few weeks of ratline training, one upperclassman said he only "saw a rat. I didn't see male or female; their gender was just transformed into one single rat."

VMI's tale of successful assimilation provides ample evidence to rebut Stephanie Gutmann's shrill and strident antifeminist polemic, *The Kinder, Gentler Military*. Gutmann argues that the costs of gender integration have been far greater than the benefits. Though one wants to ask "to whom?"

Gutmann rehearses the three classic arguments that have been deployed against women's entry into every single public-sphere institution throughout our history. First, she claims, women just can't do it. The average woman cannot perform adequately and effectively; gender integration means a double standard. (This tired and untrue canard is reminiscent of Harvard education professor Edward Clarke's warning in 1873 that women are not mentally capable of withstanding the rigors of college education and that if women went to college their brains would grow bigger and heavier and their wombs would shrink.) Second, Gutmann argues that the presence of women pollutes the homosocial purity of military life, diluting the experience for the men (before the Tailhook harassment scandal, one pilot mournfully recalls, naval aviation was "a real brotherhood"). This leads to a softening of discipline and "unit cohesion"—that deep, binding, pure and non-erotic sacrificial love that the men feel toward one another. Gutmann expresses sympathy for the "shamefully unmilitary situation" of one benighted sergeant who now has to "mentor" young recruits "instead of the manly pursuit of bellowing at boys." As a result, today's military is one of America's most politically correct institutions—overrun by GI Janes who can't do enough push-ups and by rules that prevent the most

egregious excesses (she actually provides a ringing, if tinny, defense of Tailhook as just boys being boys).

These are the standard victim-blaming complaints, and Gutmann repeats them thoughtlessly, before adding another: The presence of women makes it harder to get men to join up. How are they going to prove their manhood with women around doing the same thing? (That warfare itself has changed doesn't enter into the discussion.) Her investigations turn up a host of career sailors and soldiers who agree that military heroism is attainable only after one passes through a training regimen of brutality and torture, of deliberately stripping away dignity and full-throttle spit-in-the-face screaming at the young recruit. Gutmann seems unable to find any military personnel who think gender integration is a good thing.

Gutmann is afraid that the new kinder, gentler military is also softer and weaker, that men have become "feminized" in their forced adherence to the new rules of decorum. She isn't nostalgic for that world of Southern honor; she mourns the demise of military machismo, that brutal do-or-die-ism of the fiercest fighting force ever assembled. Phyllis Schlafly once called the Justice Department's case against VMI a "no-holds-barred fight to feminize VMI waged by the radical feminists and their cohorts in the Federal Government."

Such fears, though, have it exactly backward. Virtually all the research on women in the military—and women in every public arena formerly closed to them—finds the real problem to be the perceived masculinization of the women. Femininity is always questioned when women enter a new public arena, whether the military, the college classroom, the factory or the corporation. As the old adage puts it, men are unsexed by failure; women are unsexed by success. "This is VMI," one female cadet put it, "where the men are men and so are the women."

Of course, it's a done deal anyway, and women are in the military—and police forces, fire departments, VMI and the Citadel—to stay. Gutmann recounts a telling exchange. During the Tailhook hearings, Barbara Pope, the only woman on the Navy's investigation panel, began to mutter about old-boy networks, foot-dragging and clubbiness, all of which hampered the investigation. "What you don't understand, Barbara," Rear Adm. Mac Williams admonished her, "is that men in the Navy don't want women in the Navy." "Mac, you don't get it," she replied. "Yes, some

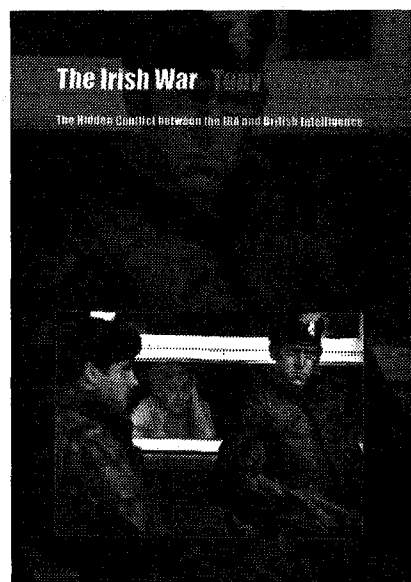
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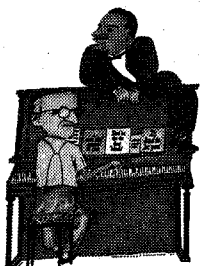
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men don't want women in the Navy. Things were easier when women weren't there. But if men can't accept women and integrate women into the military, then they shouldn't be there."

And increasingly, they aren't. Women are there, and the men are getting used to it. Just as those male journalists had to get used to women like Gutmann and Manegold in their ranks—though men had earlier issued dire warnings that women didn't have the nose for hard journalism and that women wouldn't be able to get a story because of the sexual tension with sources (who were, presumably, only men).

During one of my site visits to the Citadel, I had this exchange with a military captain, a woman who was on the staff of the psychological counseling services. She was describing her activities in the Air Force Reserves as a loadmaster on cargo planes during Desert Storm. When she began, her fellow reservists (male) were exceedingly chivalrous, giving her a wide berth, making sure not to touch or bump into her, and also did not include her in informal activities. She felt like an outsider. This, of course, made her uncomfortable, because she wanted to fit in.

Eventually, she said, their attitudes changed. "What caused this change?" I asked. "The fact that I was there, doing my job," she answered. "Has this been good for you, to be free of such excesses of chivalry and to be treated as equally competent?" I asked. "Yes." "And do you think it's a good thing for the men to have changed in this way, to now be able to look at you as an equally competent member of their reserve team?" "Of course," she said. "And do you think that they could have made such a change without your presence there, without your having been accepted into the reserves and willing to stick it out?" I asked. "No," she said, somewhat flustered.

New players and new rules may, however, be just what is needed down at the ol' PX. The reality is that cruel and inhuman punishment as masculine initiation—whether in the Marine Corps or at the schools where boys play soldier with no consequences—may have been functional for Braveheart, but even by Vietnam it was an anachronism, made palpably evident by the filmic evolutionary throwback John Rambo. The wars of the present and the future—whether in the Persian Gulf, Kosovo or somewhere else—will have far different rules of engagement and far different criteria for heroism.

Since the Supreme Court decision, life hasn't been easy for women at either school.

The Citadel remains beset with problems. Two of the first four women cadets left the school after their complaints of sexual harassment—they'd been doused with lighter fluid and then had matches tossed at their shirts, for one thing—were met with another circling of the wagons. And just recently Petra Lovetinska, the school's top-ranking female cadet, was demoted. Apparently, there is a time-honored tradition that knobs are commanded by seniors to pour ketchup or salad dressing on the shoes of other seniors. (This, like most "traditions" at the Citadel, is probably no more than twenty years old.) Lovetinska didn't particularly enjoy having the salad dressing poured on her, so she wiped her shoes on the cadet's trousers. She—not the knob or the senior who put him up to it—was disciplined by the school. In other words, she was demoted for resisting this utterly sophomoric prank.

At VMI, it's been equally unpleasant for both women and men, and roughly equal percentages drop out of the ratline. VMI accepted its defeat—if not exactly gracefully, at least with a certain amount of resigned integrity, neither bowing to "watered down" double standards nor resorting to vicious informal subterfuge. If the Citadel has remained unreconstructed, continuing to fight a rear-guard action like that rogue Tennessean Nathan Bedford Forrest, the Confederate general (and former wealthy slaveowner) who is credited with founding the Ku Klux Klan, VMI has taken a more noble course, like that noble son of Virginia, Robert E. Lee, whose dignity in surrender provided a model of Southern honor for generations of young boys, North and South, to emulate.

And Erin Claunch? Well, just as Petra Lovetinska was being demoted at the Citadel, Claunch was selected as one of two battalion commanders at VMI, the second-highest military position at the school, leading half the Corps of Cadets. Was she selected because she was a woman? Hardly. After outperforming most of the men in the unchanged VMI physical fitness regimen, running cross-country and maintaining a 4.0 average, "it was just a matter of her being qualified for the job," commented one of the male cadets who was on the selection board. Gender, insists Derek Bogdon, the cadet selected as the other battalion commander, is no longer an issue at VMI. "They're our brother rats," he says. "They went through the same thing that we did."

Citadel loyalists and their sycophantic feminine followers like Stephanie Gutmann could learn a thing or two from Erin Claunch. Can women do it? Sir! Yes Sir! ■

The Sri Lankan Patients

TOM LECLAIR

ANIL'S GHOST. By Michael Ondaatje. Knopf. 311 pp. \$25.

This time none of that lollygagging elusiveness that began *The English Patient*. Not that novel's gauzy "she" but Anil Tissera, 33-year-old forensic anthropologist returning to her native Sri Lanka to investigate possible human rights violations. We know almost immediately that she left the country at 18 to be educated in England and America, and that her Western training has given her both an attitude and an appetite for unearthing truth. Anil meets her co-investigator, Sarath Diasena, a 49-year-old male archeologist who, like Anil, comes from a well-to-do Colombo family. In the first fifty pages, Anil and Sarath uncover a skeleton that has been reburied in a government archeological preserve.

The detection begins. Who was the skeleton they call Sailor? Who tried to burn his bones? The skeleton is a mystery but not the romantic enigma slowly dying in *The English Patient*. And the violence has not receded, as it had in World War II Italy. The time is almost now, and all around the detectives are reports of terror—by the southern insurgents, the northern guerrillas, perhaps by government hit squads.

Anil and Sarath drive into the countryside to ask for help from Sarath's former professor, a now-blind epigraphist living in the "Grove of Ascetics," a Buddhist forest monastery. We get a few pages of the esoteric history and exotic sensibility Ondaatje loves, but on the way back to Colombo the present asserts itself when the investigators find a man nailed to the highway. They take him to a hospital where Sarath's brother, Gamini, works as an emergency services doctor. He describes in gruesome detail the victims of terror bombings. The prose is concrete, direct, wearied. You wouldn't know Ondaatje has published eleven volumes of poetry.

Who is responsible for the terror? Who killed Sailor? Anil and Sarath drive to the south and hire a miner named Ananda to reconstruct the skeleton's head so the victim can be identified. Here we get some of the researched expertise Ondaatje also loves; Ananda's reconstruction is like Kip's deconstruction of bombs in *The English Patient*. But the face Ananda rebuilds

doesn't aid the investigators, for it's a ghost's, not Sailor's. The expression is serene, the look Ananda hopes is on the face of his disappeared wife.

Halfway through the book, Ondaatje's purposeful pace slows. Perhaps now we'll begin to understand why thousands of Sri Lankans are killed or disappeared every year—but no, we get instead a hundred pages of flashbacks about the characters' tragic loves, "The Sri Lankan Patients." Anil was unhappily married in England, stabbed her married lover in California and found that her lesbian lover, Leaf, has Alzheimer's. Perhaps past personal failure, not future public truth, has brought Anil back to Sri Lanka.

Gamini was in love with Sarath's wife, married someone else, became obsessed with his medical practice, started taking amphetamines and lost his wife. Now he often sleeps in the wards. After Sarath's wife committed suicide, he immured himself in his archeological studies. Only Ananda has lost a spouse to terror, perhaps the reason he tries to commit suicide after bringing "her" back. Gamini and Sarath are killing themselves more slowly, indirectly.

This middle section of *Anil's Ghost* resembles the beginning of *The English Patient*: rapid switching among characters, times, locales. The novel becomes self-conscious and defensive about abandoning its detective plot. In a flashback, Anil and her lover Leaf watch movies on a VCR: "the films staggered backwards and forwards... until the actions became clear to them." Leaf says, "I'm just a detail from the subplot, right." Sarath seems to speak for this long section when he disagrees with Anil's definition of truth as verifiable and public. For Sarath and Ondaatje, truth is "in character and nuance and mood." While Ananda continues the reconstruction of the skull, Anil engages in moody meditations, attends to the nuances of plant life and the decaying house where he works.

In the last thirty pages Ondaatje rushes *Anil's Ghost* to its conclusion. We do get a

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public truth—that the government killed Sailor, who was suspected of sympathizing with the insurgents. Or perhaps with the guerrillas. It doesn't make much difference because Ondaatje never provides any information about the two groups or why they're killing people. Anil takes her forensic findings to government authorities; Sarath saves her from detention or worse by pretending to undermine her truth; Gamini discovers Sarath's body several days later; and, finally, Ananda finds new employment reconstructing a tall statue of the Buddha that had been toppled not by terrorists but by impoverished people seeking a treasure within. So, five pages from the end Ondaatje offers this one small gesture of understanding a cause of political terror.

Sarath and Gamini, educated Sinhalese residents of Sri Lanka, must know the causes, the fist of recent history: the economic effects of postcolonialism, the religious conflict between Hindus and Buddhists, the ethnic hatred between several groups of Tamils and the dominant Sinhalese. Anil, who is Sinhalese, also knows. So does Ondaatje. But the reader never learns about this history. What happened in the courts of sixth-century Sri Lanka or fifth-century-BC China, yes. But not in the past thirty years in what used to be Ceylon.

"A good archaeologist can read a bucket of soil as if it were a complex historical novel," thinks Anil. The formula should be reversible, but Ondaatje shows no interest in the soil and roots of ethnic oppression. Instead he repeats the blind epigrapher's near-tautology: "The main purpose of war had become war."

Ondaatje does indict the Sinhalese government in the deaths of Sailor and Sarath, but the human rights activist Anil gets Sarath killed in the process of exposing her truth; she and her finding disappear from the novel. But just after Gamini discovers his brother's body, Ondaatje describes in horrific detail a terrorist blowing up himself, the president of the country and a bunch of other people. The novelist tips the quantitative scale as well as his hand, identifying the terrorist only as D—. No ethnic identity, no political affiliation, no history. It's D—'s tragedy that I want to know. For what public love or political hate did he kill himself?

But Ondaatje doesn't look there. He takes the long view. The reconstructed Buddha of the Sinhalese gazes across killing fields, sees what Ondaatje implies is the human condition anytime, anywhere: senseless violence, pockets of love. Ondaatje and the Buddha could be right, but

the author's apolitical gaze seems irresponsible when there's so much politics to see in Sri Lanka. Sarath and Gamini criticize Western journalists for swooping into Sri Lanka, tossing off some reductive political analysis and leaving. I don't see the difference between that and Ondaatje revisiting his native land, observing victims, avoiding political analysis and then retreating to Canada.

While standing on a platform, preparing to paint in the Buddha's eyes, Ananda feels that as an artificer "he did not celebrate the greatness of a faith. But he knew if he did not remain an artificer he would become a demon. The war around him was to do with demons, spectres of retaliation." This is high-minded consciousness for a man whose former work had him on hands and knees in muck hundreds of feet below the earth's surface. Ananda sounds like the author's apologist. I'm not asking the artificer who invented Ananda to be a demon, but Ondaatje must know that his highly selective contrivance will retaliate somewhere, that its silence on class and religion and ethnic prejudice can comfort those with historic or recent privilege.

Despite its evasions, *Anil's Ghost* could still be a courageous book. I doubt that Ondaatje will suffer Salman Rushdie's fate, but given the ongoing disappearances in Sri Lanka, Ondaatje may well not wish to return there soon. He went back in 1978 and 1980, then wrote a poetic and nostalgic memoir, *Running in the Family*, about his once-wealthy family of eccentrics. In that book, too, he turns away from politics to personal lives. At the age of 11, Michael was ripped from wealth and homeland by his parents' divorce. One understands why *The English Patient* and *Anil's Ghost* foreground tempestuous, failed loves. Still, to use terror as a background for class nostalgia and romance seems overkill.

In a recent interview on *Anil's Ghost*, Ondaatje said, "Certain words, certain phrases are said so often that they come to have no reverberation. 'Human rights,' the phrase is indivisible, but the words mean nothing to me. When I hear the word 'politics' I roll my eyes, or if I hear a political speech I can't listen to it. And so in a way I burrow underneath these words, and I try not to refer to them. The words are like old coins. They just don't feel real."

For Ondaatje, "real" words are those the poet can sneak into the minds and mouths of highly educated and exquisitely sensitive characters. Anil distrusts Sarath for his retreat into the "aesthetic." Ondaatje should distrust himself. Now I don't trust his col-

lage method. It's a way to avoid banal, "old coin" cause and effect, the logic by which human rights are denied or defended.

In Don DeLillo's *Mao II*, a wordsmith novelist like Ondaatje complains that terrorists have usurped the role of novelists in contemporary culture. One way for the novelist to regain power is to occupy the mind of the terrorist, as DeLillo does in that novel. Another way is to explore the terrible conditions from which terror arises, as A. Sivanandan does in his 1998 novel about

Tamils in Sri Lanka, *When Memory Dies*.

In *Anil's Ghost* Ondaatje chooses to write his "real" words and beautiful sentences for the walking ghosts of Sri Lanka, the traumatized apolitical survivors. But what about the dead? The tens of thousands of dead—the women and men, Tamils and Sinhalese, poor and rich, the loved and unloved, who died or murdered for political causes, however misguided, necessary or crazy—deserve more understanding and respect than Ondaatje gives them. ■

THEATER

The Talk in Laramie

ELIZABETH POCHODA

THE LARAMIE PROJECT

Fifty years ago Thornton Wilder admitted that he disliked the theater. Too theatrical, he said; too stale to express how people actually think and feel. Since Wilder's time there have been plenty of experiments in eliminating the kind of staginess he thought interfered with reality and undermined belief.

The Tectonic Theater Project's production *The Laramie Project*, currently playing at the Union Square, is, admirably, one of these. From its initial set—a stark space with five crude oak tables resembling a rural polling place on voting day—to the plain-song delivery of its players, the air of the piece is immediate and democratic. The audience is let in on everything—from the company's decision to make six trips to Wyoming to conduct hundreds of interviews to their individual fears about the project. It's almost as if dissolving the old theatrical hierarchies is the first step in bringing home to us the 1998 beating and death of young, gay Matthew Shepard on the outskirts of Laramie, Wyoming, by two local heterosexuals about his age.

The Tectonic Theater members know something about the power of fact. Their *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*, built entirely from historical documents, was the surprise Off Broadway hit of 1998, delivering a more vivid picture of Wilde and his times than any of the numerous stage or film versions you are likely to see. The actors inhabited the speech and gestures of Victorian Englishmen just as they do the citizens of Laramie. But in *The Laramie Project* they go

further, reminding us frequently of who they are in the company as opposed to whose words they are speaking—whether those of the emergency-room doctor who treated Shepard, for instance, or the bicyclist who found him tied to a fence, or his friends and those of the killers, or university people, law enforcement officials, religious leaders and sundry others. Candor rules, facts liberate and we should have no illusions, theatrical or otherwise.

This is, of course, the stage landscape that Anna Deavere Smith staked out in *Fires in the Mirror*, her 1991 piece about the Crown Heights riots, and *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*, the series of interviews she conducted around the Rodney King incident and its aftermath. Though both start from a morally neutral point of view, the Tectonic's ensemble effort in *Laramie* and Smith's solo re-enactments of her interviews play out quite differently.

Near the beginning of *Laramie* a professor at the University of Wyoming describes the aftermath of Shepard's beating, ending with the moment "the media arrived and there was no opportunity to reflect on anything anymore." Reflection is one thing, but spontaneous speech is quite another, and despite some intense moments in *The Laramie Project*, you do get the sense that many of these citizens were talked out well before they were interviewed by the Tec-

Elizabeth Pochoda, executive editor of House & Garden, is a former Nation literary editor.

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tonic players. Some, like the bartender who served both Shepard and his killers on the fateful night, deliver a media-worn routine. Others respond with sentiments and wisdom received from the media.

Strangest of all, their language is almost polished. Unlike most of us, they usually finish their thoughts; their sense of themselves and their self-presentation is firm; and they speak without what Smith calls the "sludge" of language—the linguistic noodling that inadvertently reveals character in hesitations, redundancies, pauses, non sequiturs, evasions and nonsense. Perhaps the individual interviews didn't go on long enough to break through the sincere but unwittingly well-rehearsed to a moment of revelation, but I doubt it. If Wilder was right about the stage interfering with reality, what would he say about the frame the media has put around our speech and our lives? The television screens suspended on the back wall in the second act of *The Laramie Project* seem to acknowledge this problem but maybe not the toll it has taken on what we can and cannot learn here.

The communities of Crown Heights and Los Angeles were also talked to death in the aftermath of their cataclysms, and yet Smith's theater pieces dug out new material from the sludge of speech, wince-making riffs and inspiring ones as well, fresh revelations even from the stalest language. How she does this I can't say. The eminent linguist William Labov once observed that the talk of almost all middle-class people is virtually interchangeable, and yet Smith finds distinctiveness and a hidden charge of meaning within the most mundane delivery, whereas the citizens in *The Laramie Project* mostly bear out Labov's observation. At the end of *Fires* and *Twilight* you can say, I have been shown something I didn't know, and yet it is something I recognize as true. The word "catharsis" comes to mind.

Laramie is a town with a terrible crime, but no terrible truths come to light here. This beautifully staged canvassing of its citizens is well paced and absorbing but not ultimately affecting. The focus of the piece, the gay hate crime, as the media insisted on describing it, is a problematic center maybe because it rests on the processed wisdom of too many people at the mercy of too many articles, newscasts and interviews. Laramie does not seem any more homophobic than many other places—perhaps that's why it's hard for *The Laramie Project* to go deep enough to reveal something we didn't know we knew. Shepard was a victim because he was gay, but the beating was, as JoAnn Wypijewski wrote in *Harper's*, more an opportunistic crime by two louts

at the end of a methamphetamine binge than an act of homophobic rage.

The members of the Tectonic Theater Project radiate honesty; they found what they found. But I wandered from the performance occasionally to consider, unfairly perhaps, what they didn't find, and afterward I wondered whether the secret shame of Laramie might be that in this upright community there's an element of routine and absent-minded moral indifference. After all, a substantial number of people, like the killers, seem to have been written off by the rest of Laramie as social discards, or "lazy little crankheads," as one local described them to *Vanity Fair*. Drugs and the dead-end lives of the killers are two motifs, little examined in the press, that also do not figure into *The Laramie Project*—untold stories lurking beneath one too often told.

In *Short*: Jo, in Claudia Shear's *Dirty Blonde* (Helen Hayes Theatre), has a thing about Mae West, and I have a thing about Claudia Shear. The fact is, I know she's way more interesting than Mae West, who was only one of those small, controlling blondes fixated on sex but not very sexy, like Madonna or Andy Warhol. Claudia is not small and her wonderful solo show, *Blown Sideways Through Life*, an extended description of a big girl's sixty-four-job search for decent work, reminded me of the biography of Gutzon Borglum, who carved Mount Rushmore. If he hadn't found such an extravagant outlet for his pathology and his ambitions, only the local lockup would have heard of him. I imagine something of the sort might have awaited Shear without her improvisations on the stage. Anyway, *Dirty Blonde*, a three-person play set in the present, with re-enactments from West's life, is a great vehicle, and Shear and her excellent co-stars, Bob Stillman and Kevin Chamberlin, drive it with maximum risk. From its strike-me-pink lipstick set to the finale with the greatest kiss on Broadway, *Dirty Blonde* goes deep into the heart of the stigmatized and comes out with a perfect piece of Erving Goffmanesque wisdom: We like these stories of the marginal; we know them well. And how is that? We are all stigmatized.

From what I am told, *Our Lady of Sligo* is not Sebastian Barry's very best play; *The Steward of Christendom* apparently holds that honor. You should go anyway to the Irish Repertory Theater to see the superb Sinéad Cusack in the title role. "Utterly without ego," my theater mate remarked of Cusack's performance. Remarkable and true. ■

FILMS

To Catch a Thief

STUART KLAWANS

SMALL TIME CROOKS • MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE 2

As Woody Allen awoke one morning from uneasy dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into Jackie Gleason. The covers had slipped off his belly, so that he looked down from the freshly Brylcreemed pillow upon a hemisphere of flesh, which already was quivering with babyish violence.

What about sleeping a little longer and forgetting this nonsense, he thought. Only six months had passed since *Sweet and Low-down*, and Mother and Father were dead. Yet his unaccustomed bulk had begun to intrigue Woody Allen, who wondered at how The Great One used to slide about in this body. Could he, too, move in rolls and waves? With firm resolution, he pushed himself off the bed.

"What's that?" someone cried, as he hit the floor. Although the bedroom door was locked, Woody Allen knew at once this was Tracey Ullman's voice. Something in her tone—or perhaps in this apartment, which he now perceived to be cramped and dingy—put him in mind of Audrey Meadows. At once, his limbs began to flail in self-contradiction, one arm stretching greedily as if to enclose his fictional wife, the other cocking back in mimed assault. "Wait, and I'll let you in!" he called, though she had neither asked for admission nor threatened to leave. Was this what it meant to speak like Jackie Gleason in *The Honey-mooners*—to miss the point, to babble and fume? He suddenly realized that Tracey Ullman would snap all the wisecracks, while he would be reduced to empty threats and nonsense syllables. All his life, Woody Allen had stammered, as too many ideas fought to reach his tongue. Now he would stammer for want of words.

There, in spirit, you have the premise of *Small Time Crooks*, one of those comic miniatures that are a particular glory of Allen's career. I can't guess what uneasy dream might have inspired him to take on Gleason's persona, in the way he's previously emulated Bob Hope. All I know is that a supposedly stable commodity, "the Woody Allen movie," has somehow retained its identity while morphing into a feature-length version of *The Honey-mooners*, complete with dumb pals, a cock-amamie get-rich-quick scheme and the

final "Baby, you're the greatest."

Of course, when you move from spirit to flesh, you find that Allen is hilariously out of proportion to the role he's assumed. As Ray Winkler, an ex-con who is currently working as a dishwasher, he first shows up in midstride on the streets of Manhattan, a copy of the *Daily News* tucked under one arm, his hands stuck deep into the pockets of his walking shorts. The gait is energetic, but the body's missing; the famous eyeglasses and nose seem to be bouncing on an armature composed solely of elbows and knees. Yet this is the corpus with which he claims to menace his wife, Frenchy (Ullman): a trim woman of middling size, with hair that must outweigh Ray by five pounds. "Get me my dinner!" Ray bellows; and for some reason, perhaps boredom, Frenchy rolls her toreador slacks off the bed on which she's been reposing, watching yet another TV show about Princess Di. She's as big as her husband and has him intellectually overmatched. But it seems that Frenchy has weaknesses. First, she actually loves the shnook she married. Second, as the Princess Di fixation suggests, she longs for respectability, and does so with all the fervor of a onetime stripper. It's this second vulnerability that leads to a quick, rough education for Frenchy and Ray, after they strike it rich.

Although Ray's initial criminal scheme is a bust, it launches Frenchy on an unexpected career in the cookie business, in which there's money galore. Yet when Frenchy, now dressed in much pricier leopard-skin outfits, attempts to follow Di's example and become a patron of the arts, she learns that her talent for things that taste good has not translated into good taste. "Show them your collection of leather pigs," Ray says encouragingly, as Frenchy gives a cluster of appalled socialites the tour of her new, gilt nightmare on Park Avenue. (The shrieks and giggles of the

film's production designer, Santo Loquasto, are now reputed to echo from a refuge upstate.) And so, with admirable though fatal determination, Frenchy vows to improve herself. Her chosen instructor: Hugh Grant, here cast as a perfectly hugh-grantlike art dealer named David, whose savoir-faire and pheromones must surely rub off on Frenchy.

Ray, being incapable of improvement, sulks off into the company of someone who is as contentedly low-class as himself, and even dumber: Frenchy's cousin, who smiles as if recently struck on the head and snuffles the dialogue up her nose. To improve the joke, this logic-frazzler is played by one of the world's most terrifyingly brilliant people, Elaine May. Seeing her with Woody Allen is a joy comparable only to the meeting of Chaplin and Keaton in *Limelight*. With what sweet patience she endures Ray's sputterings! And with what joy he badgers her! At last, a woman who won't talk back. Sideways, he can deal with.

In the past, when mocking the stupidities of working-class people, Allen has sometimes vented a rancor beyond his anger at rich and middle-class idiots. *Mighty Aphrodite* provides one example of the trait, with a wallop of misogyny thrown in. *Small Time Crooks* offers the redemptive sight of Allen's biases running the other way. This, too, may be to the credit of *The Honeymooners*. It was the show with the grimmest-looking set on television, where wife and husband, though locked into the strains of lifelong penury, kept rediscovering their mutual affection. *Small Time Crooks* has none of *The Honeymooners'* old-neighborhood sentimentality (just as Allen lacks The Great One's bulk). And yet loyalty and lack of pretense count as overriding virtues here, as they did on Gleason's show, lending a surprising warmth to the humor of *Small Time Crooks*.

The visual equivalent would be the rooftop sunset that cinematographer Zhao Fei renders, with magical skill, toward the beginning of the film. It's one of those views of urban prettiness for which Allen has always been a sucker. Maybe it's also the sign of a late-career glow.

All art aspires toward the condition of music, wrote Walter Pater at the dawn of Modernism, codifying a tendency of his particular era as if it were general law. For no more than a hundred years after he set down this rule, artists rejoiced in (and struggled against) the urge to create self-sufficient works, which, responsible only to their own inner motions,

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might float free of the everyday. Gravity has since then grabbed us back, with a vengeance; once more, and too well, we understand the pull of patronage and social function. But those who gloat at this return to normality might at least nod toward the achievements of Modernism, which include the collective creation known as the movies.

At their highest level of abstraction, the movies (as distinguished from film) are a delirium of bigger-than-life ghosts: figures who are overpoweringly present and yet insubstantial, impossibly beautiful and sure to suffer for their beauty. At least, that's the condition the movies used to aspire toward: the plane that Hitchcock termed "pure cinema." In our postmodern era, only a handful of moviemakers still hear that music, let alone know how to play it—which is why I've given my heart to John Woo's latest étude in lyric slam-bangery, *Mission: Impossible 2*.

As an antigravitational artwork should, *M:I 2* takes place largely in midair; its god-like stars are forever dangling from helicopters, launching heavenward on motorcycles, plunging headlong out of skyscrapers or (in a traditionalist spirit) hanging from cliffs. Who are these vulnerable yet invincible beings? They are master spy Tom Cruise (as suave as Cary Grant in *To Catch a Thief*, and twice as acrobatic), teamed with master thief Thandie Newton (as beautiful and doomed as Ingrid Bergman in *Notorious*). They meet on a flamenco-mad night in Seville, amid blue light and flashing red skirts. They first kiss on a terrifying mountain road, inside the wreckage of the sports cars with which they were attempting to kill each other. At the movie's midpoint, within a gleaming secret laboratory in Sydney, Australia, they give voice to the torment of their consciences, in a conversation frequently interrupted by the need to whirl about and shoot bad guys or to blow the architecture full of big flaming holes.

The heroes and heroines of previous John Woo movies have also labored under burdens of guilt, which can be relieved if the star glides in slow motion through tongues of fire, in the company of a white dove. In other words, sin is expiated both by suffering and by looking really, really cool. In *M:I 2*, Cruise is so cool that he receives his secret-agent instructions in the form of high-fashion sunglasses. The shades (actually a recording device) are delivered to him on a splendid American mountain-top, by a missile launched from a helicopter. Subsequently, they are flung, in slow motion, straight at the audience, only to

explode in midair. We mortals cannot catch the star-gear. Our fate, and privilege, is merely to watch the fragments glitter on the screen.

If you are familiar with *Mission: Impossible* as an old television series, or if you've seen the first of the movie versions, you will note that I've said nothing so far about teamwork and planning. Woo actually cares a lot about those aspects of life, but only as they play out behind the camera. His films are logistical masterworks, constructed to draw action out of action in seemingly endless succession—but you are never to think about the work that went into these sequences, only about the impression they give of flamboyance, energy and gaiety of invention.

Of course, as a *Nation* reader, you will demand more. So I will report that the music of *M:I 2* is not entirely pure. There are words in the screenplay, written by Robert Towne; and these words include the bad guy's explanation that "terrorists and pharmaceutical companies" are lining up to do business with him. What's more, when the bad guy is being really rotten, he belittles women and demands stock options.

I hope that satisfies you. For myself, I'm happy to know that Tom Cruise has learned to hold his arms straight out before him, the better to pump away with a gun in each hand—just like Chow Yun Fat.

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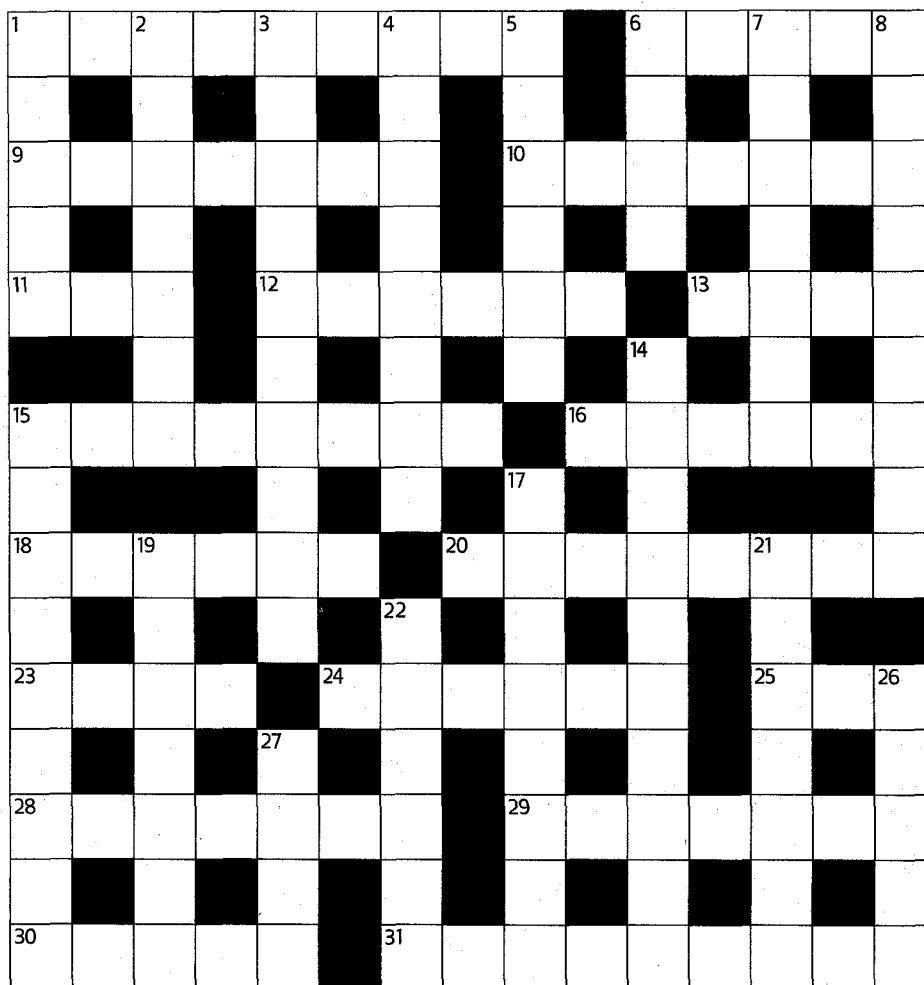
FRANK W. LEWIS

ACROSS

- 1 Brought forth one with difficult roles for one unlikely to win. (4,5)
- 6, 23 and 27 down A Grecian vale that sheds a tear on what might be a no-parking area being warm in summer and cold in winter. (9,4)
- 9 A place on the Dark Continent seen in a bad light by one called Sal. (7)
- 10 How to make an entrance the subject or topic, possibly. (7)
- 11, 12 and 13 Ready for this? (It's better than a statement that the occasion could get somewhat rotten later!) (3,4,2,4)
- 15 So-called oaters where the rest is disturbed by all the directions given around it. (8)
- 16 A machine broken during WWII with the game in somewhat of a mess. (6)
- 18 And in Berlin, such as a good picture comes back about it, but it's rather barren. (6)
- 20 Sometimes a bridge player might wish this were a legitimate call, to cause a downfall when sort of blue finally. (8)
- 23 See 6
- 24 and 25 What one might be asked to do on certain applications, being somewhat of a hanger-on. (9)
- 28 Take little notice, when I sit for my picture, being somewhat fat. (7)
- 29 Made evident as a wild vine, with a short month returning. (7)
- 30 The old girl from Chelsea sounds as though she should appear in lower case. (5)
- 31 Cut off more than one 24-25 or drive all the "belongers" away? (9)

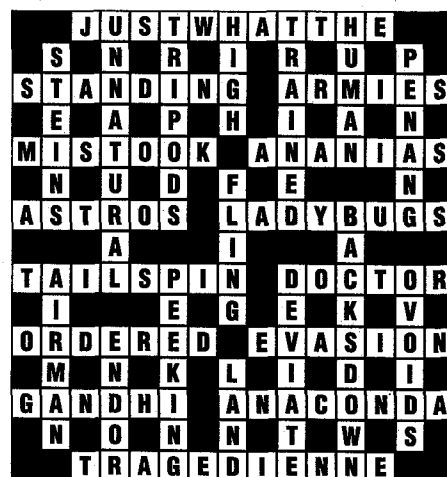
DOWN

- 1 When this with troubles, one doesn't like to get such at the card table. (5)
- 2 Those that move fast under the sled? (7)
- 3 Not heavy times by which certain things are measured. (5,5)
- 4 A claim to pepper's accompaniment by someone who certainly would not want to be sent here. (4,4)
- 5 Concerning a couple of things to fix. (6)
- 6 A noxious weed in the Bible and a bad 23. (4)
- 7 Perhaps a suit of armor with a piece of string and what one does with the cards at a particular time. (7)
- 8 A former spouse has only one 23 to free from blame. (9)
- 14 Not fussy about the religion type evidently—or fussy about the "when" involved. (3,3,4)
- 15 What they might serve as a drink at the entrance is a scandal! (9)
- 17 Steering numbers of this wrong? (8)
- 19 In getting up, makes fun of silly people! (7)
- 21 Mama Bruin might, but Baby Bruin certainly is! (4,3)
- 22 How the hands are positioned in an illegal face-off, as one hopes the law will be. (6)
- 26 Was Abel such a brother official of the church? (5)
- 27 See 6 across



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SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 2757





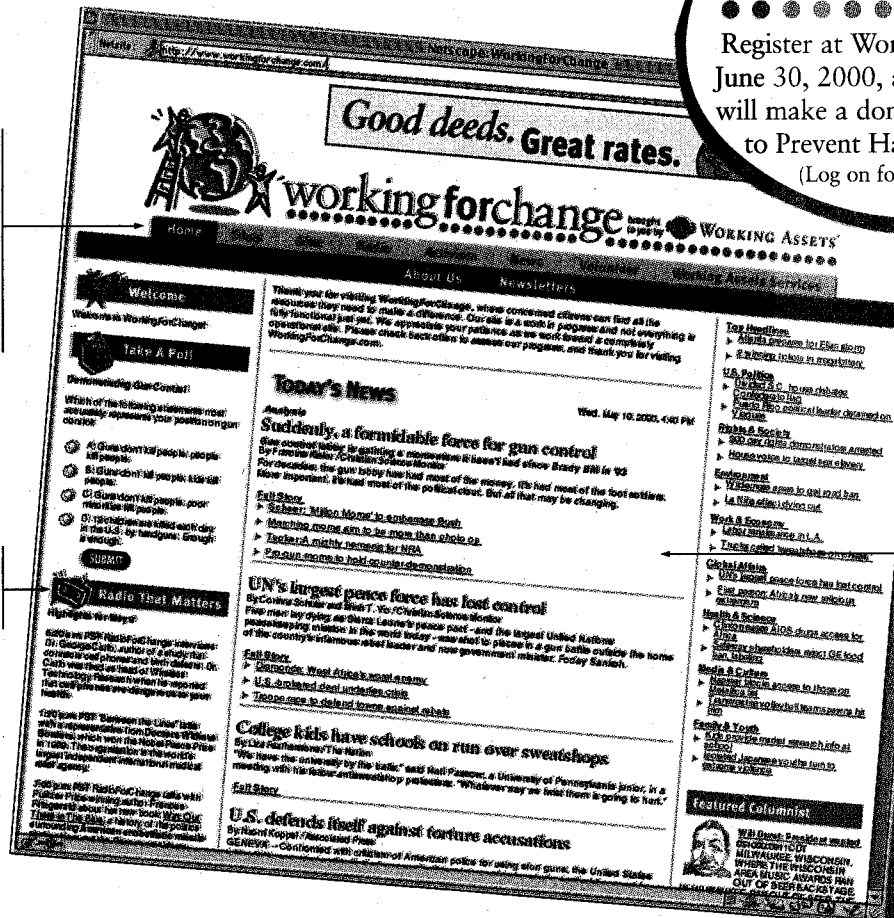
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